

BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

November

Now
15¢



A new series **THE WOLF OF ARABIA**

TARZAN and the Leopard Men
By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

By Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie

A Mighty Engine

“**F**ICTION,” observed Channing, “is no longer a mere amusement; but transcendent genius, accommodating itself to the character of the age, has seized upon this province of literature, and turned fiction from a toy into a mighty engine.”

For this reason we who deal with this “mighty engine” take our job very seriously; and we expect our contributors likewise to be conscious of a real responsibility.

It is the first purpose of this magazine to offer you the best fiction entertainment obtainable—and no entertainment of any sort, it seems to us, can equal that! But fiction deserving of your attention should offer you something more: some new fact to know, some new idea to think about, some new place to visit, interesting people for your acquaintance—and a heartening spirit of humor, courage and humanity. These also, so far as is possible, we strive to offer you.

Not many stories, of course, can give you all or even most of these things. Yet now and then some special achievement really does this. Consider in this light, for instance, “When Worlds Collide,” by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie: it offers you new ideas to think about, new facts to know, interesting people—and in the climax a place fire-new indeed to visit!

“The Woman of Antioch” in this issue likewise scores very high by these standards; and we believe you will agree that the succeeding adventures of that fascinating character known as “the Wolf of Arabia” will also win an excellent rating. . . . So on through the magazine: entertainment first, of course; but entertainment of a sort that will leave in your mind something of real value to you.

—*The Editor*

GIVE AWAY FREE SHIRTS

TIES-HOSIERY-UNDERWEAR

EARN BIG PAY This
Easy Way
JOIN THE GOLD RUSH

1 SHIRT
FREE
with every
3

1 TIE
FREE
with every
3

1 pr.
HOSE
FREE
with every
3

1 suit
of UNDERWEAR
FREE
with every
3

Stop and think of the tremendous selling force one Carlton garment FREE with every three, offers you. Why, man, it's a one call-walk-away order everytime—no turn downs. The garments are designed on Fifth Avenue, America's style center for finest quality men's apparel. Priced lower than at any time in fifteen years. These are advantages over competition that's got 'em all stopped.

ORDERS and CASH Yours EASY

The FREE give-away has caught the fancy of millions of people. They love it, men! And come back for more. Big cash commissions on original and reorders, besides \$25.00 weekly cash bonuses—easy to get; in addition, you automatically become a partner in this great business to the extent of 40% profit-sharing. Money coming to you all the time.

Send for Our Gorgeous Fall Outfit Today

This wonderful order-getting Sample Outfit contains the newest creations in Fall Shirtings — Hosiery — Underwear — Neckwear — Sheepskin Coats and Leather outergarments. Join the Carlton money makers—represent the industry's oldest, most reliable institution. Get started at once! MAIL IN THAT COUPON—Let Carlton show you an easy road to success.

MAIL this COUPON

MR. MANDEL, President
CARLTON MILLS, Inc., 79 Fifth Ave., New York
Dear Mr. Mandel: I know I can earn big pay giving away your Free Shirts, Ties, Underwear and Hosiery. I am anxious to get started at once.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

MEN X

THIS COUPON CAN

SOLVE THE

MENACING

PROBLEM OF

1932 FOR YOU

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

"The Universal University" Box 2461-C, Scranton, Penna.
Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet,
"Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject
before which I have marked X:

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

- Architect
- Plumbing
- Steam Fitting
- Architectural Draughtsmen
- Heating
- Ventilation
- Building Estimates
- Wood Millworking
- Sheet Metal Worker
- Contractor and Builder
- Steam Engineer
- Structural Engineers
- Automobile Engineers
- Civil Engineers
- Electric Wiring
- Surveying and Mapping
- Electrical Engineer
- Refrigeration
- Electrician
- R. R. Locomotives
- Gas Fitter
- R. R. Section Foreman
- Heating Sheet Blowers
- Air Brake
- Building Foreman
- Telegraph Engineer
- Highway Engineering
- Telephone Work
- Chemistry
- Pharmacy
- Mechanical Engineers
- Coal Mining Engineer
- Mechanical Craftsmen
- Diesel
- Machinist
- Toolmaker
- Patternmaker
- Textile Overseer
- Pipefitter
- Tinsmith
- Cotton Manufacturing
- Bridge Engineer
- Woolen Manufacturing
- Bridge and Building Foreman
- Agriculture
- Farming
- Gas Engines
- Diesel Engines
- Aviation Engines
- Radio
- Marine Engineering
- Farming
- Radio

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

- Business Management
- Business Correspondence
- Office Management
- Lettering Show Cards
- Industrial Management
- Stenography and Typing
- Purchasing Management
- Commercial
- Traffic Management
- Oil Refining
- Accountancy
- Mail Order
- C. P. A. Counseling
- Railway Mail Clerk
- Bookkeeping
- Spanish
- Secretarial Work
- French
- Salesmanship
- Advertising
- Wall-paper Decorating
- Salesmanship
- Illustration
- Cartooning
- Lumber Dealer

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Occupation _____

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian Limited, Montreal, Canada

If you're worried about your job, money, getting ahead—follow the example of others who worried, too, and are now business leaders because they marked and mailed this coupon



BLUE BOOK



NOVEMBER, 1932

MAGAZINE

VOL. 56, NO. 1

Two Memorable Serials

When Worlds Collide	By Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie	30
A stranger star rushing to destroy us—and an Ark of the Air built for our rescue.		
Tarzan and the Leopard Men	By Edgar Rice Burroughs	104
The world's champion adventurer in new exploits.		

Fascinating Short Stories

The Woman of Antioch	By William J. Makin	6
The Intelligence officer known as the Wolf of Arabia fights to save a king.		
Rough Going	By Francis Wallace	23
A full-back who wouldn't fight back gets mad at last.		
The Lost Luck Powders	By Arthur Akers	53
When this dark black boy lost his "goofier dust," he learned what real trouble was.		
That Tall Girl Belle	By Beatrice Grimshaw	62
What happened when her gypsy father took her to a South Sea Island.		
Murder Will Out	By Arthur H. Carhart	72
This Western sheep-dog would take on his weight in wildcats.		
The Return of the Exile	By Clarence Herbert New	82
The Free Lances in Diplomacy deal with the man who led a great nation to war.		
Mr. Pinfeather Pioneers	By M. Bowman Howell	94
A real comedy by the author of "Half a Horse."		
Boulder Catches a Torpedo	By Frank Knox Hockman	124
Yet he protested because some one tied down a safety-valve.		

A Swift-Moving Novelette

The Man in the Scarlet Mask	By Seven Anderton	132
The author of "Three Who Would Hang" and "The Damned Thing" at his best.		

Prize Stories of Real Experience

The Snowslide	By J. C. DeWall	151
This miner's greatest adventure was above-ground.		
Flying for Life	By H. Latane Lewis	153
A barnstorming pilot loses his landing-gear.		
Old Copperstock	By Ai Dee	155
Two boys, two guns—so called; and an angry bear.		
Hard of Hearing	By John Meehan	156
It's no joke to be deaf—especially in a hold-up.		
A Night of Terror	By Jack Skosko	158
A boy trails his father to a fatal fight.		

Cover Design

Painted by Joseph Chenoweth



THE McCALL COMPANY,
 William B. Warner, President and Treasurer
 John C. Sterling, Vice-President
 Francis Hutter, Secretary

Publisher, The Blue Book Magazine

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

Published monthly, at McCall St., Dayton, Ohio. Subscription Office—Dayton, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices—229 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. The BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE—November, 1932, Vol. LVI, No. 1. Copyright, 1932, by The McCall Company. In the United States and Great Britain, Enclosed as second-class matter, November 12, 1909, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription Price, \$1.50 per year. Canadian postage 50¢; foreign postage \$1.00. For change of address, give us four weeks notice and send old address as well as new. Special Note: Each issue of The Blue Book Magazine is copyrighted. Any republication of the matter appearing in the magazine, either wholly or in part, is not permitted except by special authorization. Special Notes to Writers and Artists: Manuscripts and art material submitted for publication in The Blue Book Magazine will be received only on the understanding that the publisher and editors will not be responsible for loss or injury thereto while such manuscripts or art material are in the publisher's possession or in transit.

Prize Offer for your Real Experiences

IT has been said that there is material for a novel in every person's life. Whether this is true or not, we do believe that in the lives of most of us some experience has occurred sufficiently exciting to merit description in print. With this idea in mind we shall be pleased to receive and to print true stories of real experience, running from one thousand to four thousand words each. For each of the five best of these received each month we will pay, according to our appraisal of its length and strength, \$50 or more.

In theme the stories may deal with adventure, mystery, sport, humor,—especially humor!—war or business. Sex is barred. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Real Experience Editor, the Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Preferably but not necessarily they should be typewritten, and should be accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope for use in case the story is unavailable.

A pen name may be used if desired, but in all cases the writer's real name and permanent address should accompany the manuscript. Be sure to write your name and correct address in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of your story, and keep a copy as insurance against loss of the original; for while we handle manuscripts with great care, we cannot accept responsibility for their return. As this is a monthly contest, from one to two months may elapse before you receive a report on your story.



Confidence—and Cash

"The N. I. A. training has taught me how to write a good news story, and why it should be written that way. By applying this knowledge I was enabled, before quite completing the course, to sell a feature story to *Screenland Magazine* for \$50, and was given an intermediate assignment to do another for the same magazine. I am now doing fiction and have had one short short story published. Previous to enrolling in the N. I. A. I had never written a line for publication, and I still expect to do so." —Gene H. Levant, 2300 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Cal.

How do you know you can't WRITE?

Have you ever tried?

Have you ever attempted even the least bit of training, under competent guidance?

Or have you been sitting back, as it is so easy to do, waiting for the day to come some time when you will awaken, all of a sudden, to the discovery, "I am a writer!"

If the latter course is the one of your choosing, you probably *never will write*. Lawyers must be law clerks. Doctors must be internees. Engineers must be draftsmen. We all know that, in our times, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that any one becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

Learn to write by writing

NEWSPAPER Institute training is based on the New York Copy-Desk Method. It starts and keeps you writing in your own home, on your own time. Week by week you receive actual assignments, just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily. Your writing is *individually* corrected and constructively criticized. A group of men with 182 years of newspaper experience behind them are responsible for this instruction. Under such sympathetic guidance, you will find that (instead of vainly trying to copy some one else's writing tricks) you are rapidly developing your own distinctive, self-flavored style—undergoing an experience that has a thrill to it and which at the same time develops in you the power to make your feelings articulate.

Many people who *should* be writing become awe-struck by famous stories about millionaire authors and, therefore, give little thought to the \$25, \$50 and \$100 or more that can often be earned for material that takes little time to write—stories, articles on business, fads, travels, sports, recipes, etc.—things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

How you start

We have prepared a unique Writing Aptitude Test. This tells you whether you possess the fundamental qualities necessary to successful writing—acute observation, dramatic instinct, creative imagination, etc. You'll enjoy taking this test. The coupon will bring it, without obligation. Newspaper Institute of America, 1776 Broadway, New York.

Newspaper Institute of America
1776 Broadway, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your *Writing Aptitude Test* and further information about writing for profit, as promised in Blue Book, November.

Mr. _____

Mrs. _____

Miss _____

Address _____

(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.)

62K382

Why don't you write?

HOW I STEPPED Into A Big Pay HOTEL JOB

Without Previous Experience, A. L. Cummins becomes Hotel Manager In 4 Months with a 50% Increase Salary.

"I can hardly believe it is true. A garage, knowing nothing about hotel work before enrolling, I secured my first hotel position after completing only one-third of the Lewis Course. Training at home, in spare time, in less than 4 months I was made MANAGER with a 50% increase in salary. My success is due to the Lewis Training Schools. I shall never regret the day I clipped coupon and sent for their literature."

Opportunities for Trained Men

Good positions for trained men in hotel, club, restaurant and institutional field. Positions as Manager, Assistant Manager, Steward, Auditor and many others paying \$1,800 to \$5,000 a year. Living often included. Previous experience proved unnecessary. Lewis-Trained men, both young and mature, winning success. Good grade school education preferred. Training qualifies you in spare time, at home. FREE Book tells how to secure a well-paid position. Registration FREE of entry cost in Lewis National Placement Service which covers every state at 10,000 points through special arrangement with Postal Telegraph. Write your name and address in margin, check positions in which you're interested and mail this ad TODAY for Free Book, "Your Big Opportunity."

LEWIS HOTEL
TRAINING SCHOOLS

Room ET-717, Washington, D. C.



Good Posits for MEN

- () Manager () Steward
- () Ass't. Mgr. () Auditor
- () Club Eng.
() Sports Director
- () Maitre d'
() Room Clerk

HOME-STUDY BRINGS BIGGE PAY

Don't be caught napping when Opportunity knocks. Prepare for advancement and more money by training now for the job ahead. Free 64-page Book "Tell How." Write for the book on the business field you like—or mail us this ad with your name and address in the margin. Now, please.

Higher Accountancy	Business Mgmt's
<input type="checkbox"/> Mod. Salesmanship	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus. Mgt. Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Collection
<input type="checkbox"/> Law, Domestic & L.L.B.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus. Advertising
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Foremanship
<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Mgmt	<input type="checkbox"/> Persol Mgmt
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking and Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Exper-bookkeeping
<input type="checkbox"/> Telegraphy	<input type="checkbox"/> C. P. Coaching
<input type="checkbox"/> Retail Store Mgmt	<input type="checkbox"/> Sales Techniques
<input type="checkbox"/> Railway Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper Salesmanship	<input type="checkbox"/> Effects Speaking

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

Dept. 11388-R

Chicago



FREE FALL CATALOG

at Off the Press
towing Hunting
Shs. Duck Hunting
Bts., Sleeping Bags,
or other Leather and
Civis Specialties.

L. L. BEAN, Mfr.
133 Main St.
F-Report, Maine

BE A DETECTIVE

Work home or travel. Experience unnecessary.
DETECTIVE Particulars FREE. Write NOW to
GEORGE BOB WAGNER, 240 Broadway, N. Y.

Next

Mountain Men

By ROBERT WINCHESTER

A stirring novelette that deals with an earnest little war fought out in the mountains of Kentucky.

Bedsteads in the Desert

By WILLIAM MAKIN

A fascinating adventure—in the Desert of Singing Sands—of that daring Intelligence officer known as THE WOLF OF ARABIA.

The Last of The Thunder Herd

By BIGELOW NEAL

A sequel to that fine epic of early America published last month—"The Passing of the Thunder Herd."

The Bamboo Jewel

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

The swift-moving story of an American mining man's terrific adventure in the interior of China.

TARZAN

and the Leopard Men

By EDGAR RICE
BURROUGHS

Specially exciting chapters in this new story of the world's greatest fiction hero.

Month

When Worlds Collide

By EDWIN BALMER
and PHILIP WYLIE

This tremendous story of the Stranger Stars, the League of the Last Days and the Ark of the Air grows in power with each chapter.

And Many Others

EARN MONEY AT HOME

YOU can make \$15 to \$50 weekly in spare or full time at home coloring photographs. No experience needed. No canvassing. We instruct you by our new simple Photo-Color process and supply you with work. Write for particulars and Free Book to-day.

The IRVING-VANCE COMPANY LTD.
308 Hart Building, Toronto, Can.

SUPPRESSED KNOWLEDGE OF THE AGES

What strange powers did the ancients possess? Where was the source of knowledge that made it possible for them to perform miracles? Were these profound secrets buried with ancient libraries, or are they buried beneath crumbling Temple walls?

These wise men of the past knew the mysteries of life, and personal power. This wisdom is not lost—it is withheld from the mass. It is offered freely TO YOU if with an open mind, you wish to step out of the rut of monotonous existence and MASTER YOUR LIFE.

THIS FREE BOOK.

Man's intolerance has at times swept his achievements from the face of the earth, yet secret brotherhoods have preserved this sacred wisdom of the ages. The Rosicrucians, one of these ancient brotherhoods, INVITE YOU to write and secure a free copy of the "Wisdom of the Sages." It will point out how you may receive age-old truths. You can learn to MAKE YOUR LIFE ANEW—the fulfillment of your ideals awaits you. Address:

Serial R.R.E.

ROSCRICIAN BROTHERHOOD
SAN JOSE [AMORC] CALIFORNIA

Williams Gets The Last Laugh!

Raises pay
to \$9,000
a year



"Mr. C. P. A."—
that's what the
boys at the bank
jokingly called
Fred Williams
when he enrolled
with LaSalle. The
idea of a mantry-
ing to learn by
how to sit up a
branch business
as specialized and highly-paid as Higher Accounting!

But Fred Williams got the last laugh. Not only did he pass the C. P. A. examination—but today, just nine years later—he is head of his own Chattanooga firm, and clearing—in the average—\$9,000 a year. The men who once laughed at his ambition are coming to him for jobs.

\$50.00 for Each Hour of Study

Mr. Williams writes: "Your representative told me when I enrolled that I would receive \$50 for each hour of study, but I have far exceeded that figure a number of times. I think your training is very complete and, to my mind, it is to be preferred to any other course in accounting available—preferred even over the courses offered by resident universities. It is very thorough, practical and easy to master. inspirational and interesting."

He further adds: "Knowledge of Accounting is an essential in modern business, whether practiced as a profession, or used by the executive."

Whatever your ambitions—no step you can take—no study you pursue—will repay you more than Higher Accounting. The reason why Accountants rise so rapidly is simply because their tools play an increasingly important. They are the most valuable employees of every industry—guiding each enterprise into the horizon of financial security.

Just a short period of study with LaSalle gave Williams the training which helped him climb from \$125 a month to \$2,000 a year. Is such a reward worth a few months—one or two years—of your leisure time? Are you willing to spare them?

Book That Has Inspired Thousands FREE to You

No previous knowledge of bookkeeping is necessary. LaSalle will take you as you are and prepare you—in every step—for the \$3000—\$300—\$10,000 a year positions. The coupon below will give you the complete story of LaSalle's Success Building Plan, together with a copy of "Free Book of Books," Accountancy, the Profession that Pays. "Do not hesitate—cut, mail the coupon now—NOW, so that you can attain the success you've dreamt about that much earlier!"

LaSalle Extension University

The school that has trained
over 1,100 C. P. A's

Dept. 11369-HR Chicago

I should be glad to have details of
your salary-increasing plan in the
business field checked below.



<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accountancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Foremanship
<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Salesmanship	<input type="checkbox"/> Expert Bookkeeping
<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Expert Costing
<input type="checkbox"/> Railway Station Mgmt	<input type="checkbox"/> Business English
<input type="checkbox"/> Railway Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Law—Duties of LL. B.	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective Speaking
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Chain Store Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Credit and Collection Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking and Finance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stenotypy	

Name.....

Present Position.....

Address.....



The Woman

A fascinating story of that strange Anglo-American adventurer and secret service officer known to the Arabs as the "Wolf of Arabia."

AT ten o'clock!" The whisper reached the man with the pockmarked face. Without turning his head, he nodded, and pushed his fez at a jaunty angle. Then he drained his cup of Arab coffee at one gulp, flung a piastre to the waiter, and sauntered into the street.

He stood for a moment on the pavement. Before him, like a talkie-film strident with megaphones, was the clang-ing, dusty rush of Cairo in the evening. Tramcars spilled coffee-colored men at every corner. Boys clamored the sale of lottery tickets. News-vendors shrilled against the tinkling bell of a sherbet-seller. The noise rose in titanic waves against the tall, drunken houses that made a barrier for the Mouski bazaar.

"Ten o'clock!"

The pockmarked man whispered the command to a sweetmeat-seller squatting at the corner. This individual merely waved a cloud of flies from his sticky wares—but not before he had repeated the whisper:

"Ten o'clock!"

Puffing a highly perfumed cigarette, the pock-faced man continued his stroll. He had entered one of those narrow cañons between the tottering houses, a busy street in the bazaar. It was flaming with kerosene, and redolent with strange smells in the midst of which brightly robed men and black-veiled women haggled over their purchases.

Carefully, the pock-faced man stepped

aside to avoid stumbling over a camel squatting in the slime. A donkey, unnoticed, delicately licked the sweetmeats at one of the stalls. Through the jostling crowd careered a boy on a bicycle, ringing his bell, shouting and behaving like a trick cyclist.

"It is now five minutes to ten!" shrilled a young Egyptian, proudly displaying a new wrist-watch. Two men who had asked him the time, guffawed.

The shout had reached the pock-faced man, but he ignored them. Through the smoke of his cigarette he was gazing at the Arabic sign over an open shop front. It read:

MAKMOUD ALI
Vendor of Carpets

From behind a multi-colored collection of rugs rose a bearded face. Slightly tinted spectacles hid the eyes.

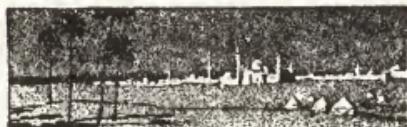
"You buy a rug—a cheap rug?" asked the bearded man, who was obviously Makmoud Ali himself.

The pock-faced man ignored the suggestion. He fingered, casually, one of the rugs.

"A Bokharan rug," whined the bearded Makmoud Ali. "I sell it for a hundred piastres."

The pock-faced man withdrew the cigarette from his lips and blew a cloud of smoke into the air.

"Show me something better than this rubbish," he murmured.



of Antioch

By WILLIAM
J. MAKIN

Illustrated by
Dan Sayre Groesbeck

The eyes behind the tinted spectacles gleamed.

"Allah has sent you," babbled Makmoud Ali. "Come inside, and I will show you a beautiful rug that has come from a palace in Persia. *Eee!* A rug from Isphahan itself."

Indifferently, then, the pockfaced man lunged into the shop. A rug, rich and glowing, was spread over the little counter. It was the color of dried blood, and Makmoud Ali stroked it sensuously.

"Such a rug I will sell for a thousand piastres," he babbled. "It is a rug fit for a prince. Even the Holy Carpet itself is not so imposing."

The pockfaced man shook his head. His hands had strayed beneath that spreading luxuriance, as though he too would stroke the velvet pile.

"Take it away!" he growled. "I am no tourist to pay such mad prices."

With a sigh, the bearded man drew the rug toward him. In doing so he revealed one of the hands of the pockfaced man. It held a gleaming revolver, and a brown finger curled dangerously about the trigger.

Startled, Makmoud Ali allowed the rug that was the color of dried blood to slip to the floor.

"Make a sound," snarled the pock-faced man, "and you die!"

At that moment a cheap clock at the back of the shop tinkled ten o'clock—a quick, jerky tinkle.



But neither Makmoud Ali nor the pockfaced man stirred at the sound.

A shuffle of feet, and a file of men entered the shop behind the pockfaced man holding the revolver. One of them was the sweetmeat-seller from the corner of the street. Another was the young Egyptian who a few minutes ago had been proudly displaying his new wrist-watch. And there were others, lithe, strong men.

"Upstairs!" came the command from the pockfaced man.

A hanging rug was thrust aside. Quickly yet noiselessly the men entered and climbed the stairway that was revealed, and when the little group had reached the floor above, silence descended upon the shop.

"Hold out your hands!" commanded the pockfaced man.

With a sigh, the bearded Makmoud Ali thrust his brown wrists forward. There was a click, and he was handcuffed.

A khaki-clad policeman entered the shop. The pockfaced man nodded in the direction of the handcuffed Makmoud Ali.

"Keep an eye on him!" he ordered. And without a second glance, he ran lightly up the stairs.

The floor above was swathed in smoke. Through the murky film it was possible to discover several bodies strewn about the floor. At first glance it suggested that some madman had run amok in



that room where plaster crumbled from the walls. But one of the bodies, a pot-bellied Egyptian, was being ruthlessly hauled to his feet by two of the men who had entered the shop at the moment Makmoud Ali was being handcuffed. Other bodies were ruthlessly kicked awake. Snarling epithets in Arabic, and sleepy grunts mingled.

"All hashish-smokers—doped," said one of the group coming over to the pockmarked Egyptian. "What are your orders, Hassan Bey?"

The Egyptian selected another perfumed cigarette and lit it with care.

"The jail," he replied briefly. "We will examine them at our leisure in the morning. Maybe we shall find the man we seek. The jail will cool their fevered dreams."

"Very good, Hassan Bey."

HE rattled his orders in Arabic. One by one the hashish-smokers were taken down the stairs and stowed like sacks in four carriages with lean horses drawn up outside the carpet-shop. Some of the stupefied smokers were dragged by the heels, a foolish grin twisting their lips. Hassan Bey peered with his pock-marked face in the smoke-filled corners of the room. Suddenly he drew back with a grunt of astonishment.

An Arab in a blue burnous was eying him with quiet deliberation from beneath the cowl of his cloak. And those eyes, so alert and so penetrating in their glance, were strangely gray. The Arab sat still as a statue.

"Who are you?" asked Hassan Bey in Arabic.

"An Arab."

It was the harsh speech of a man from the desert.

"That is evident," said Hassan Bey, a dangerous flush crossing his pock-marked face. "Whence do you come?"

Those gray eyes regarded him calmly. "The desert," said the Arab.

"That also is evident, son of an unmentionable!" snarled Hassan Bey, baring his teeth. "And what are you doing here?"

"Nothing."

Without hesitation Hassan Bey let out a kick at the ribs of this monosyllabic Arab. He felt, for one luscious moment, the toe of his Parisian shoe bruising the flesh of the Arab in the blue burnous. But the next second the room reeled about him. A fist had caught his jaw and brought him with a surprised

thump to the floor. He lay there, trying vainly to understand what had happened, while the harsh Arabic spat at him through the fumes:

"You unbegotten swine!"

But a medley of brown hands stretched out for the Arab who had dared to strike Hassan Bey of the Cairo police. They clutched that blue burnous and twisted his arms behind his back. The Arab kicked out and sent two men howling with pain to the floor. But another Egyptian and yet another leaped forward. Their hairy brown arms were about his throat. They bore him to the floor, and there was the click of steel as he was handcuffed.

Hassan Bey was sitting up, rubbing his chin.

"See that this spawn of the desert has a cell to himself," he remarked ominously. "By Allah, he will be sorry for that blow."

Still struggling, but helpless against the odds, the Arab in the blue burnous was dragged to the staircase.

"One moment!" ordered Hassan Bey, struggling to his feet.

He walked over to the squirming figure and gazed down upon it with a leer on his face. His brown hand fumbled for a moment in the blue burnous. Then, with a grunt of triumph, he drew out a flat-shaped object—an automatic. He looked at it, and then at the strangely gray eyes of the Arab.

"I think we have found our man," he said aloud. Then, with a gesture of his head, he dismissed the captive and his men, who promptly hurried down the staircase to the waiting carriages.

Once again Hassan Bey peered into the dim corners of that smoke-swathed room. It was empty. He found his cigarette smoldering on the floor where it had fallen when that Arab had struck him. Muttering, he picked it up, placed it in his mouth and puffed carelessly. Then he slowly descended the staircase to the carpet-shop beneath.

His assistant awaited him.

"A good haul, Hassan Bey," he ventured.

The pock-faced man nodded.

"Not so bad. And my carriage?"

"It awaits you, Hassan Bey."

The pock-faced man sighed. He walked toward the door. Then a thought struck him. He turned back, and picked up the blood-red carpet that Makmoud Ali had displayed before him. He slipped it under his arm.



"Make a sound," snarled the pock-faced man, "and you die."

"Yes, a good haul!" he muttered, and passed out into that narrow street of the Mouski.

BARRINGTON PASHA, chief of the Cairo police, adjusted his monocle, pushed his fez back from his pink brow, and stretched his expensive riding-breeches beneath the desk. He wanted to be at ease.

Within the drab kalsomined walls of his office he had to listen to the continual reports, the promptings and the urgings of the pock-faced man. In reality, Barrington Pasha hated Hassan Bey. But the pock-faced Egyptian was useful—too useful! The fellow was able to move about the underworld of Cairo with the slinking sureness of a rat.

"And so, Hassan Bey, you think he is the man we are looking for," drawled Barrington Pasha.

"I am sure of it, sir," smirked the Egyptian. "He was hiding in the hashish den we raided last night. He speaks and behaves like an Arab from the desert—a real Bedouin. But I found this on him."

And he laid the automatic with a dramatic gesture on the desk.

Barrington Pasha glanced at it idly. "Latest pattern, eh," he muttered. "It looks suspicious. I'd better see the fellow."

"Yes sir."

The Egyptian walked to the door and

yelled an order. There was a shuffle of feet, and between two khaki-uniformed policemen the Arab with the blue burnous appeared. The cowl still covered his head, and his body drooped as in pain. But the gray eyes stared forth aggressively, though there seemed to be the glitter of fever in them. He faced the pink-browed Englishman with indifference.

Barrington Pasha removed his monocle, polished it with a silk handkerchief and replaced it. He did this instinctively. It had terrified more than one criminal brought before him.

"Your name, fellow!" he began, sternly.

The Arab in the blue burnous opened his lips to speak. But only a groan came forth. He lurched forward, and would have fallen if the two policemen had not clutched him. And in clutching him, the cowl of the burnous slipped away from the head of the Arab, revealing a mop of flaming red hair.

"Water! For the love of Allah!" croaked the Arab.

Barrington Pasha had risen to his feet in surprise. He gave a quick glance at Hassan Bey, who had an evil leer on his face. From that smile the Englishman understood something of the painful night spent by the Arab in the jail beyond.

But the leer on the face of the Egyptian widened as he saw the monocled Englishman take up a riding-crop from his desk and slash cruelly at the blue-garbed Arab.



Hassan Bey let out a kick at the Arab. The next second a fist caught his jaw and brought him to the floor.

"Get back from my desk, you dog!" shouted Barrington Pasha.

The Arab fell back with a groan. Barrington Pasha nodded to the two policemen.

"All right! Leave him with me," he ordered. "He shall speak before he drinks."

The policemen saluted, and marched out of the room, leaving the Arab swaying drunkenly against the wall.

The monocle swiveled round on the pock-faced Egyptian.

"I'll ring when I need you, Hassan Bey," he said quietly.

"But sir, the man is dangerous," protested the Egyptian.

"So I see," replied the Englishman quietly. "But then, I have—this."

And he toyed with the automatic on his desk.

Hassan Bey smiled. "Of course, sir. I'll be within call, sir."

And he also saluted the monocled figure before leaving the room.

The door closed. One minute elapsed. The Arab in the blue burnous still swayed against the wall. And he was watched, quietly, by the man at the desk.

Then Barrington Pasha slowly rose and walked to a cupboard. He brought

forth a bottle of whisky and a siphon of soda. Deliberately he mixed a stiff drink. The fizz of the soda as it was squirted into the glass brought life into that swaying figure against the wall. A black tongue licked the dry lips.

The monocled Englishman walked over to the Arab.

"Here, old fellow, drink this!" he said quietly in English.

A lean brown hand grabbed the glass and drained it at one gulp. With an effort he pulled himself together and handed back the glass.

"Another, if you would be so kind," he murmured, also in English.

BARRINGTON PASHA obeyed. There was something in the tone of the man's voice that made him obey. But as the Arab gulped that second drink, he could not resist a question.

"Who are you, my dear fellow? I guessed, from the badge you showed me, you were Intelligence. But—"

Something like a smile crossed the face of the Arab in the blue burnous.

"Have you a cigarette?" he begged.

Barrington Pasha flashed his gold-

plated case. The Arab selected one, accepted a light, and drew the smoke in greedily.

"A thousand thanks, Barrington," he murmured. "And now if I can rest my bruised body in a chair for a few minutes, I'll try and give an account of myself." He flopped wearily into the chair that the monocled figure hastened to place before him. "A better set of thugs than the men who look after this jail I've yet to meet," he went on. "They seem to have kicked all the life out of me."

"My dear fellow—" began Barrington Pasha concernedly.

THE Arab waved his cigarette in a gesture of protest.

"I can't really complain," he said. "After all, a good many kicks are part of the game. But that villain Hassan Bey is going to get the biggest hiding in his life before I leave Cairo."

"I sincerely hope he will," drawled Barrington. "It'll do him all the good in the world. But again you rouse my curiosity. Who are you?"

For answer, the other allowed the blue cowl of his burnous to slip from his head. Once again that flaming crop of red hair was revealed.

"Doesn't this damned red hair of mine shout the good news?" he grinned. "It's the one part of me I can never disguise. Thanks be to Allah, there are a few Arabs with red hair—holy men, too."

Barrington Pasha drew in his breath sharply.

"Red Rodgers! By all that's wonderful!" he exclaimed. "Red Rodgers of the Red Sea!"

Again the Arab in the blue burnous smiled.

"So I'm called—in the vernacular," he said. "Really, Paul Rodgers, sometime of the British Intelligence Service. And damned badly paid, too, let me tell you."

Barrington Pasha went quietly to the door of his office and listened intently. Then he turned, adjusted his monocle firmly and gazed at this slim, unprepossessing figure whose exploits were whispered in bars, coffee-houses and even Government corridors from Port Said to Aden.

Red Rodgers of the Red Sea! Few claimed to have set eyes on this strange white man who could live among the Arabs, think like the Arabs, and even fight like the Arabs. Some of his adventures were like pages torn from the

book of the "Arabian Nights Entertainments." For two years he had roamed the desert as leader of a Bedouin tribe. When a certain sheik was proving troublesome to the British, Rodgers and his Bedouins had raced their camels into the stronghold of the sheik and fought a battle that was still whispered as an epic in the coffee-houses at Mokka.

"A Robin Hood of the desert," some one had once named him. There had even been strange stories about brigandage in his past. It was said that he was an American by birth and education, and had fought in an Arizona contingent in France; that he had amassed a colossal fortune; that he had fished for pearls, dug for oil, and even robbed wealthy caravans for the sake of his coffers. On one occasion the British had even sent an armored-car detachment with two airplanes into the desert to find this leader of the Bedouin tribe. But they had failed. Red Rodgers had a manner of effacing himself among the sand dunes which became perfect camouflage.

Then the man had become one of the British Intelligence Service, and joined that mystery branch of men in the English service who lived among the Arabs, molded their desires, directed their ambitions, and even fought their battles. And whenever stories were told of Lawrence, of St. John Philby, of Bertram Thomas, inevitably some adventure of Red Rodgers of the Red Sea would be related and cap them all.

"What's he doing it for? Is there a woman in his life?" These were the questions that the newcomers to the Suez and the Red Sea would ask when some of the exploits of the strange man had been related.

"There's only one passion in his life—music," a slightly drunken colonel had once admitted in the military mess at Port Sudan. "If ever you want to find Rodgers, look in any filthy den between Port Said and Aden where there's a piano. He can't keep away from those damned musical-boxes. One would appreciate him more if the fellow would play jazz. I always suspect the moral character of any man who wants to play Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata.'"

AND this was the man, in a blue burnous, whom Barrington Pasha now surveyed a little nervously through his monocle. There was nothing in the physique of the fellow to attract attention. He was slim, with a suggestion

of student frailty rather than of the man of action. The long slender fingers, browned like an Arab's, had a beauty and repose about them which would have attracted the attention of a painter. But Barrington Pasha was a chief of police, and believed more in watching the eyes of men. Certainly the gray eyes of Paul Rodgers had the cold impersonal gleam of steel at moments. They narrowed, as the man's brain began to work. And then from the steel came the sparks of intelligence as the idea was hammered out.

"He's no fool," Barrington Pasha conceded to himself.

BUT the quiet commanding voice of Red Rodgers was already speaking. "Tell me, Barrington," he asked, "why did you raid that hashish-den last night? You weren't looking for hashish, I know."

Barrington Pasha helped himself to a cigarette and lit it.

"You're right. I was looking for a man."

"Ah!"

Barrington searched those gray eyes at that exclamation.

"And what were you seeking in the hashish-den," he ventured, "disguised as an Arab?"

Red Rodgers smiled.

"I was seeking a woman."

"Ah!"

It was Barrington who made the exclamation. Curiosity shone through the monocle. Red Rodgers titillated it.

"Ever heard of the Woman of Antioch?" he asked Barrington.

"No. Who is she?"

"The most beautiful and most dangerous woman east of Suez," said Rodgers seriously. "Like most beautiful women, she can be coldly passionless where men are concerned. She regards them as something less than human. Tell me, Barrington, have you ever listened to a blood-curdling piece of music known as 'The Dance of the Seven Veils' by Richard Strauss?"

"Good heavens, no," said Barrington hurriedly.

"Well, you ought," went on Rodgers. "It describes the Woman of Antioch in all her cold ruthlessness better than anything that I can say. She's lured more than one poor devil of the British and French Intelligence service, to something worse than death." His voice dropped to a strange quietness. "I'm

searching for that woman, and I sha'n't be satisfied until my own hands are at her throat squeezing the life out of her body."

Barrington took the monocle from his eye and polished it.

"Hardly the act of a gentleman," he murmured.

"One doesn't behave like a gentleman when confronted with a snake," replied Rodgers. "But enough of that. Tell me something of the man you're seeking."

Barrington replaced the monocle. A troubled expression crossed his pink face.

"I've been scouring Cairo to discover details of a plot to kill King Saad," he said. "I had that damned hashish-den raided because I thought one of the gang might be there doping himself. Saad, as you perhaps know, returns from Luxor within the next forty-eight hours. He will drive from the station, through the streets of Cairo, and eventually to the Palace of Abdin. Somewhere along that route is stationed a machine-gun and a gang of men with automatics. It means a certain and nasty end for Saad if I can't find that nest within the next forty-eight hours."

"Haven't you searched the route?"

"Every damned inch of it. No luck."

"And no clue?"

"Not one. Only the certainty that the shooting will take place."

Rodgers stroked his thin hands. The gray eyes had narrowed, and his face seemed to have sunk into something expressionless.

"It seems a bad business," he muttered.

"A bad business!" expostulated Barrington Pasha, his face even pinker. "It's infernal."

"And only forty-eight hours in which to discover these potential assassins."

Barrington glanced at his wrist-watch.

"It's now ten ack emma. At the same hour on Thursday, King Saad begins his ride from the railway station through the streets of Cairo; and it will most certainly be his last ride through Cairo if I don't discover this gang."

Rodgers considered the problem for a moment. Then he rose from the chair and stubbed the end of his cigarette in the ash-tray.

"Would you like me to help you, Barrington?" he asked.

"My dear fellow, it's awfully good of you. But—"

"But you don't think I shall have any luck, eh?"



"Water! For the love of Allah!" croaked the Arab.
"Get back from my desk, you dog!" shouted Barrington Pasha.

Barrington shuffled his feet.

"By all means do what you can, Rodgers," he said. "But I've got squads of men scouring every quarter of Cairo."

"So I've noticed," murmured Rodgers, ruefully. He dragged the cowl over his flaming red hair. "Anyhow, kick me out of here, and I'll see if I can do anything."

Barrington Pasha regarded him curiously.

"Of course, this is entirely unofficial," he said. "As Chief of Police, I can't give you any authority."

A smile crossed the brown features.

"I understand perfectly," he murmured. "And now ring for that blackguard Hassan Bey. The first of those forty-eight hours is ticking away."

Somehow, the Chief of Police could not resist that quiet, commanding tone. He pressed a bell beneath his desk. Almost immediately the door opened, and the pock-faced Egyptian appeared. Barrington did not look up from his desk.

"Take this Arab away and kick him into the street," he growled. "He's a fool, but an honest fool."

A look of astonishment came over the face of Hassan Bey.

"But sir—"

"That's all. Kick him out!"

Discipline asserted itself. "Yes sir."

He grabbed the figure in the blue burnous, and hurried him to the door. The noise of the Arab's going resounded along the corridor. A few thumps, a yell of pain, and much swearing in Arabic. With his head cocked at one side, Barrington Pasha listened. There was faint amusement in his eyes.

It was recalled by the voice of Hassan Bey.

"But the automatic, sir?"

Barrington Pasha gave a quick glance at his desk. The automatic had disappeared.

"Well, I'm damned!" he muttered.

FOUR hours later, as Barrington Pasha was leaving Shepheard's Hotel after an excellent lunch, a bullet whistled within a few inches of his head. The bullet then flattened itself against a convenient wall.

Startled, Barrington Pasha dropped his monocle. But his face did not go white. It became violently pink. He promptly pulled forth a revolver of his own and fired at an Arab who was scuttling round the nearest corner. Then, followed by the faithful Hassan Bey and two khaki-clad policemen, he dashed to the corner.

There was no dead body waiting for them. Instead, a very live Arab was

thrusting through the congested street. He dodged almost beneath the wheels of an automobile, caused a horse to be dragged to a slithering standstill, and dived into a narrow alleyway.

"We'll get him!" snarled Hassan Bey, his face livid.

BUT their quick chase was soon impeded. Three camels, and a group of wild-haired Bishārīn camel-dealers, had lined themselves across that narrow alleyway. Hassan Bey yelled oaths at them in Arabic, and in turn the camel-drivers yelled at their beasts. Only the camels remained imperturbable in the pandemonium that ensued.

Eventually, Barrington Pasha and the pock-faced Egyptian broke through. But the scuttling Arab was being helped through the congestion. Hands touched him and twisted him in a new direction. Voices whispered instructions. Groups broke apart to permit of his fast progress, and then closed again to become a barrier for the pursuers.

The Arab permitted himself to be guided into the labyrinth in which he now found himself. He turned another corner and scuttled along a strangely silent street. He had not gone fifty yards before a brown arm stretched out from the shadows of a doorway.

"Rest here!" murmured a voice in Arabic.

With a sob, the hunted man plunged into that shaded doorway. The brown arm drew him into cool dark depths. His breath still jerked out in spasms.

"Follow me!" murmured that strange voice again, and a hand clutched the Arab in the darkness.

Two hundred yards away, Barrington Pasha, Hassan Bey and a group of Cairo policemen had come to a baffled halt. The would-be assassin had escaped. Barrington realized that he had been within a few inches of death.

"And did you notice, sir," gasped Hassan Bey, "the Arab wore a blue burlous, and fired from an automatic."

Barrington Pasha groped feebly for his monocle.

"Well, I'm damned!" he said for the second time that day.

ALONG that dark passage Red Rodgers followed his guide. There was surging within him the elation of success. He knew that his gamble had succeeded, and that he was in the house of the conspirators. A movement from Beethov-

en's "Ninth Symphony" surged within his brain. Red Rodgers had his great moments, and this was one of them.

A stone staircase mounted upward. Rodgers climbed lightly, following the dim outline of his guide. A curtain was thrust aside, and he entered a room. It was a queer interior, lit by a latticed window, fretted in stone. Three men sat at a plain deal table facing the doorway. Simultaneously they rose to their feet and bowed as Rodgers entered.

"Good day, brother!" they repeated after each other, solemnly, like boys in a school greeting their teacher.

"Good day, brothers!" muttered Rodgers, his gray eyes narrowing and his brain working quickly. "May Allah protect this household!"

The three men resumed their seats at the table. Red Rodgers appraised them in one glance. Those three men each wore different headgear. One was a Persian with a black fez. The second was a green-turbaned sheik who might have come from a mosque. The third was a red-fezzed effendi, a smart young Egyptian in a suit that had been bought in Savile Row. All of them were powerfully built, and all of them had the mad gleam of fanaticism in their dark eyes.

Instinctively, Rodgers turned to face his guide. He saw a man with no head-gear at all. Instead, a mop of black hair, golliwog fashion, streamed out from his brown head. He wore only a loin-cloth, and an ugly curved knife stuck within the folds. Rodgers knew the type at once. A Somali—one of the fuzzy-wuzzies, that fierce fanatical race who had been led against the white man by one Mad Mullah after another. The curve of the Somali's mouth was like his knife—cruel and deadly.

"You failed today, brother, but failed



splendidly," murmured the green-turbaned sheik. "You were led to us because we can help you to your vengeance."

"You can shoot again—but to better effect," added the black-fezzed Persian.

"And help to liberate a race groaning under despotism," laughed the young effendi.

Rodgers joined in the fanatical chorus.

"May Allah wither the body of Barrington Pasha when my shadow falls across him!" he growled.

The green-turbaned sheik raised a protesting flabby hand.

"Softly—softly, brother. The holy Koran preaches patience; and to him who has patience all things will come—even the joy of vengeance."

"I am ready—now," growled Rodgers.

The flashily tailored effendi leaned forward.

"Who are you? And whence do you come, brother of the cause?"

Red Rodgers' desert Arabic slipped easily from his tongue.

"I come from the Rub 'al Khali, the Great Southern Desert of Arabia," he replied. "I am called Rajil el Seyf, and I seek to make camel-dung of these cursed whites."

"They call you Rajil el Seyf, eh?" laughed the black-fezzed Persian. "*Man of the Sword!* Well, we will provide you with weapons more sure than the sword. White man's weapons. *Ahee!* Even unto a machine-gun."

"A machine-gun! By Allah!" cried Rodgers joyously.

"Hush, babblers!" cried the sheik in the green turban. "You call to the heavens like camels in pain. What, think you, the Woman of Antioch would say?"

"The Woman of Antioch!"

The words were whispered by the other two at that deal table. It was as though a chill breeze had suddenly stirred the room.

"The Woman of Antioch!"

A silence fell on that room. The three men bowed their heads as though the spoken words had been blows upon their back. Even the Somali shuffled his naked feet uneasily.

And into that silence came a rustle, the rustle of a woman's garb. Rodgers turned swiftly. He found himself facing a woman dressed completely in black—veiled like the Egyptian women, the lower part of the face being covered, and only the eyes visible. And those eyes glittered like black diamonds.

At her side was a boy garbed in a black velvet suit. The boy had the big bold eyes of his mother, and that *café-au-lait* complexion of the Syrian. Over his shoulder dangled the hennaed nails of his mother's hand.

"The Woman of Antioch!"

Once again those words were whispered at the deal table. Red Rodgers instinctively braced his shoulders at the penetrating glance those jet eyes gave him. This was the woman both beautiful and damned, the woman he had sworn to kill.

"Who is this man?"

The words, though softly and even musically spoken, had a corrosive quality; they fell like acid on steel.

"He is Rajil el Seyf, a Bedouin from the desert who has tried to kill that pig of an Englishman, Barrington Pasha."

RED RODGERS felt those black eyes tearing through his disguise. There was something uncanny in this woman, some devilish quality that caused him to feel uneasy.

"The streets are already babbling your exploit," she murmured softly. It was like the stroke of a panther. "You have done well, but not well enough. The cause does not want bunglers. In a few hours you will have a chance to kill bigger game than Barrington Pasha. A king will pass by, and his fat body will be riddled with lead."

A tinkling laugh, horrible in that quietness, fell from beneath her veil. Still caressing the boy at her side, she moved to the deal table. The green-turbaned sheik relinquished his seat with every mark of deep respect. She sank into it like a queen.

"And now let us complete the details," she murmured. "The machine-gun, the window, the automatics—all are ready, eh?"

Her Arabic had become staccato.

"We only await your presence on the scene, madame," smirked the effendi.

She turned her glittering eyes on this smartly clad youth.

"I shall be there, behind you, with an automatic to see that you do your duty," she said grimly.

The effendi paled slightly.

"And who is to manage the machine-guns?" she asked.

There was a slight shuffle of uneasiness around the deal table. Red Rodgers sensed the atmosphere. He did not hesitate.



"The Woman of Antioch!" Rodgers turned swiftly. . . . This was the woman both beautiful and damned—the woman he had sworn to kill!

"By Allah, I am the man!" he said.

The dark eyes of the Woman of Antioch narrowed as she sized up the physique, the hands, and the strange gray eyes of this Arab.

"Where have you learned to use a machine-gun?" she asked softly.

Rodgers babbled excitedly in his desert Arabic.

"Have I not fought with the Turks outside the Holy City? Have I not mown down the camels and their scum led by the great Laurens? Yea, verily, I am a devil with the machine-gun."

Rodgers' reference to the famous Lawrence of Arabia caused a stiffening in that little group. It was a name still to chill the blood of conspirators in the neighborhood of the Suez.

"So you fought against Laurens, eh?" whispered the Woman of Antioch.

"Yea, and by Allah, spilled much blood," boasted Rodgers.

Did those dark eyes smile softly at him?

"You are the man we seek," she said. "You shall fire the machine-gun."

And she stretched her hennaed nails, like the blood-red claws of a beast, across that table until they touched the hand of Red Rodgers. Her fingers closed upon his. He felt the whole warmth of her being in that touch, the sensuality of the woman, and all her desire. The perfume

of ambergris came stealing toward him, making his senses dizzy. Instinctively he raised those fingers to his lips.

"At what hour?" he asked hoarsely.

"The hour when the King passes by," she said softly.

"And the place?"

There was a momentary hesitation. The Woman of Antioch gazed quickly around the deal table. The black-fezzed Persian nodded. Also the green-turbaned sheik. And most decisively, the young effendi.

Stroking the black, oiled hair of the boy at her side, she opened her lips to speak. At last Red Rodgers was to discover the danger-spot on that route along which King Saad would pass.

But as her lips moved, a bell shrilled in the little room. It was like a warning. The woman stopped speaking. The bell seemed to stiffen the others into attitudes of expectancy.

The Somali padded in his bare feet across the room. He drew aside a little curtain and produced—a telephone! In that native house fretted with latticed windows, it was an incongruous instrument. Silently he handed it to the Woman of Antioch. She took it, and spoke in that same sinister soft voice.

"Yes?"

Rodgers heard the cackling in the receiver. He would have given a fortune to have heard those words; and his gray eyes narrowed as they watched for every fleeting expression in the dark eyes of the woman before him. He cursed the veil that hid most of her face from view. But neither from her eyes nor the monosyllables that she uttered could he glean any information. He realized

suddenly that her eyes were regarding him curiously. He was also aware that the fuzzy-haired Somali was in dangerous proximity behind him.

At last she put down the telephone. She sat there with the stillness and aloofness of a goddess. The three men with the different headgear waited. Red Rodgers waited. With arms folded, the half-naked Somali waited.

"You asked a question?" she said softly, to Rodgers.

"I asked where I might find the machine-gun."

"Ah, yes." She contemplated him for a moment. "Rajil el Seyf, throw back that cowl from your head!"

Red Rodgers regarded her in turn. Was the game up? Had she discovered him?

"I am waiting, Rajil el Seyf," she murmured.

With an indifferent gesture, Rodgers threw back the blue cowl, and his flaming crop of red hair was revealed.

"Red hair, eh?" whispered the woman. The black eyes dilated.

"Allah gave it to me," he said simply.

Slowly, the Woman of Antioch rose.

"You lie," she snapped. "Red Rodgers of the Red Sea, you came here to spy. That telephone message explained all. It came from my good friend Hassan Bey."

Rodgers promptly made a leap across the table, and at the same moment drew his automatic. But the Somali behind was too quick. He felt the strong, cruel hands at his throat. They pressed tighter. His tongue twisted in the agony of effort. Lights danced before him. He was conscious only of those jet black eyes, sparkling triumphantly. Then darkness overwhelmed him.

FAILURE makes fools of us all. It drives many men to a slough of despair in which they wallow and choke themselves to death. Others are driven to desperate chances. They gamble, hysterically, but often win through.

So it was with Red Rodgers. In the hours that followed, he tasted all the bitterness of failure. The Woman of Antioch had so plainly triumphed, had so magnificently torn away the mask of his disguise, that for Rodgers there was left only a vague wonderment. And that wonderment was concerned with the fact that he was still alive.

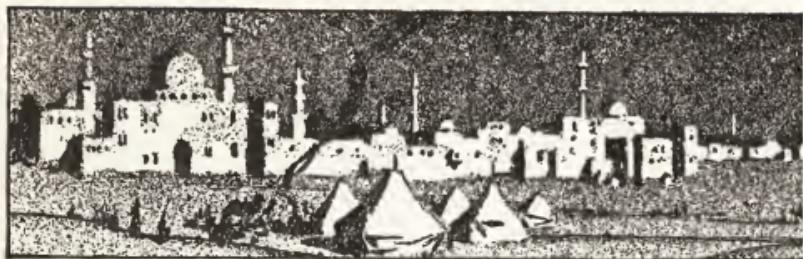
But he was not left long in doubt. In those hours of his defeat, the woman had



herself come to talk to him of the torture and the terrible fate that awaited him. She was a connoisseur in emotions. Her jet eyes would gaze at him almost with the eager curiosity of a child, greedy to discover what was going on inside that brain of his.

She would talk lusciously of the misshapen being who would crawl from that house with the fretted windows when she had finished with him—dumb, blind and crooked of limb! He would be a loathsome thing to look upon. She was even anxious not to kill him. Death to Red Rodgers would be a merciful release. No! She intended he should crawl about the dust of Cairo, pointed at as the thing that the Woman of Antioch had made of him.

Those words, dropping softly from her lips, were the torture of the hours that followed for Rodgers as he lay bound and helpless in a room at the top of the house. And, consciously, as the stark sunlight of Cairo faded into that velvet



blue of the night, he counted the hours of those forty-eight as they passed before him. Hours, long weary hours, of failure!

The night preceding the great day he spent awake in sweating agony. From the moment when the muezzin climbed a neighboring mosque and called the faithful to prayer, "*Allah O Akbar!* God is great," he twisted and tortured his limbs, was struggling to loose the thongs that the cruel-mouthed Somali had twisted about his body. But the man had done his work well. Rodgers was left with lacerated skin and a lacerating misery of soul.

Yet when the dawn came, pale and wide-eyed, he had partly succeeded. And he was clever enough to conceal it as he lay on the floor of that room, a cold sweat on his brow, and pain racking his limbs. His eyes were closed as the Woman of Antioch rustled into the room. She bent down, so that her maddening perfume overwhelmed him.

"You can hear me, Red Rodgers of the Red Sea," she said softly. "You can hear every word I speak, though your eyes are closed and that mask of a face tries to conceal the pain that tears your body. Today will be a great day in Egypt. A king will die. The mob will rise in revolt. The hated British will be driven out of Egypt. We shall see them, stampeding like camels, anxious only to save their own precious skins. By Allah, but today is the day."

Rodgers opened his eyes, and gazed at the veiled face before him.

"*Insha'allah*," he muttered in Arabic. "So be it."

"Bravely spoken," she whispered, her face close to his. "It is a pity those features of yours will soon be twisted with pain, that the tongue that speaks so sternly will be no more, and that the enticing gray eyes will be only blank sockets. A great pity! For I find you attractive—and a man."

Before he could realize it, her lips were pressed against his. The veil was away, and the white beauty of her features revealed. Her cool slim arms were about his body, and her perfume enwrapped them both. Again and again she kissed him, one hand twisting into his red hair. There was a moment when her eyes closed in ecstasy. But only a moment. And again those jet eyes blazed at him, as though they had been dipped in his blood.

"You devil!" cursed Rodgers.

She laughed, and in that laughter was an ominous foreboding of what the day would bring on her return.

"*Au revoir!*"

And the Woman of Antioch had rustled out of the room.

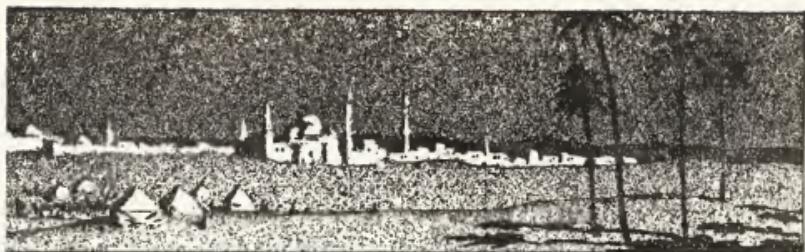
She left Red Rodgers struggling desperately. The kisses of the woman had roused him to fury. His breath came in sobs as he fought against the cruel thongs. And as the hour passed, one hand came free. A laugh escaped from his cracked lips.

"*Allah O Akbar!* God is Great!"

It was the muezzin calling the faithful to morning prayer. Rodgers could hear the slippers feet in the street below. Men hurrying to the mosque to mutter the holy words of the Koran. . . . And somewhere in the distance, a king hurrying to his death.

THEY had gone and left him alone. Rodgers bit furiously at one of the thongs. At last another hand was free. But what was the use? The rendezvous of the assassins was still unknown to him. And it was still unknown to Barrington Pasha. Of what use was his freedom?

Squirming on the floor, he released a leg. The rest was easy. As a distant clock clanged nine, he was lying exhausted and numbed on the floor of the room. Five minutes passed. In agony he crawled to the door. Locked, of



course. Another five minutes passed after that great effort. The blood began to course slowly through his numbed limbs. He felt deathly sick and ill. At all costs, he must reach the little balcony opening out from the room and breathe deeply of the fresh air. That perfume still cloyed his senses.

At last, by a supreme effort, he had reached the balcony, and drawn himself to a kneeling posture with his hands. In the agony of those moments Rodgers found himself praying. The morning sunlight dazzled his eyes. When at length he opened them and gazed below, it was upon an empty courtyard.

An empty courtyard! Once again he cursed his ill luck. If only it had been a street, one of those narrow alleyways along which the slippers feet were now hurrying to line the route to watch a king go by. Even the excited murmur of the crowd reached him in his prison room of that old house in Cairo. It filtered through the fretted window in the wall. No chance of his attracting attention there.

The empty courtyard.... But it was no longer empty. A solitary figure sat there.

Through inflamed and haggard eyes, Rodgers gazed at that figure. It was a boy in a black velvet suit. Her boy! The son of the Woman of Antioch. He played in the quiet, serious fashion of an Oriental boy, bouncing a colored ball, but not moved to laughter or excitement. The ball bounced a little higher. The eyes of the boy saw that queer Arab in the blue burnous, and with the flaming crop of red hair, clinging to the little balcony.

He ignored the ball, and gazed with curiosity at this Arab.

"Good morning," he said gravely, in Arabic.

"Good morning," replied Rodgers with an equal gravity.

Silence for a few moments. Then:

"Will you catch my ball if I throw it to you?"

Rodgers nodded.

"And throw it back?"

Again he nodded.

Solemnly the boy picked up his ball and threw it to Rodgers. He put out a feeble hand to catch it, but missed.

The boy regarded him more solemnly than ever.

"You're not very clever, are you?"

"No, I'm not very clever," admitted Rodgers sadly.

AT that moment a clock clanged the quarter. Three-quarters of an hour were left to do the impossible.

"Well, let's try again," suggested the boy in the velvet suit.

Again the colored ball was thrown; and this time Rodgers caught it. A moment later he flung it back into the courtyard, where it bounced and was caught.

"That's better," cried the boy, and threw it toward the balcony once again.

For some five minutes the game continued. Rodgers found irony in the situation. To be bouncing a ball with a boy in a velvet suit, while a machine-gun was being stationed in a window to riddle a passing king with lead! But in that situation he tasted all the sourness of defeat.

Suddenly a thought struck him. Catching the colored ball once again, he held it in his hand and leaned over the balcony.

"What is your name?" he asked the boy in the velvet suit.

The boy considered the point.

"Yama," he admitted, after a short silence.

"Well, Yama, do you like Turkish delight?"

For once the big dark eyes of the boy gleamed.

"Very much," he said quietly.

Rodgers drew in a deep breath.

"I know where to get the finest Turkish delight in Cairo," he urged.

The boy gazed at him distrustfully.

"I don't believe you," he said a little impatiently.

"Yama, I will prove it to you."

"How?"

"By taking you to the shop at once and buying a box for you."

"I still don't believe you," repeated the boy petulantly.

"Oh, well," said Rodgers and turned his back on the courtyard.

The clock clanged the half-hour.

"Will it be a big box of Turkish delight?" came the voice of the boy.

"The biggest you have ever had," said Rodgers. "But, of course, if you don't believe me—"

"All right," said the boy. "Come downstairs, and we'll go out and buy it."

Rodgers gave him a disarming smile.

"But I can't. The door of this room is locked. Do you know where the key is?"

"Yes."

But the boy made no movement.

"Well, if you think it worth the trouble of finding that key and opening the door, we'll set off at once for that box of Turkish delight."

Yama considered the venture.

"All right. I'll look for the key," he sighed, and slowly walked out of the courtyard.

THE minutes passed. Rodgers was in an agony of impatience. He dragged himself up and down that little room, gradually regaining the circulation of his body. Then he stopped, suddenly. Footsteps were on the stairs. He waited. A key was inserted in the lock. The door opened, and the boy in the velvet suit stood regarding him with his solemn dark eyes.

Rodgers swayed out of the room. The boy followed, wonderingly. Before attempting to descend the staircase, the man turned and asked:

"Is anyone else in the house?"

"They have all gone into the streets to see the King go by."

Quickly he began the descent, scraping the wall with one hand, and holding the boy with the other. Twice he stumbled and fell, but recovered himself and reached the courtyard.

They came to a heavy door, bolted. It took three minutes, three sweating minutes, before Rodgers had drawn back

the bolts and swung open the door. More dead than alive, a strange figure in his torn blue burnous surmounted by his flaming red hair, he swayed forth into the street.

"Let us hurry, before Mother returns," said the boy solemnly.

"Yes, we must hurry," croaked Red Rodgers.

It was a quarter to ten.

ALONG the narrow alleyway they ran, A into the clangling main streets of Cairo. Many turned to stare at this haggard-eyed Arab in the blue burnous, staggering along with a boy in a velvet suit clinging to his hand.

Rodgers was making for the railway station. But the boy importuned him.

"The Turkish delight!" he wailed, on the verge of tears at this hurried progress.

Rodgers fumbled in his blue burnous. They had taken his automatic, but not the money secreted against his body. He turned abruptly into the nearest sweet-shop.

"The biggest box of Turkish delight you have!" he cried to an astonished Maltese behind the counter. At the same time he spilled ten piastres before the man.

A big box was brought forth.

"Shall I wrap it up?" asked the Maltese slowly.

The boy's eyes glistened.

Rodgers grabbed the box and once more lurched forth along the street.

"But where are we going?" wailed the boy once again.

"We are going for a ride—a ride with a king!" said Red Rodgers.

And he laughed loudly.

Outside the railway station, red-fezzed and khaki-clad troops were drawn up in square formation. A bodyguard on horseback sat with statuesque immobility. A blood-red carpet trailed across the pavement, and a group of men in glittering uniforms waited. Beneath the sunshiny sky of Cairo, it was a brave sight.

Guns in the distance began to boom out a salute. King Saad had arrived. The group of men clanked their burnished swords nervously. Next moment the swarthy face of King Saad, a fine majestic figure, appeared in the doorway. There was a hoarse yell of command, and the troops presented arms.

Barrington Pasha, smart in uniform, and with the inevitable monocle, ad-

vanced two steps and saluted stiffly. King Saad smiled a greeting. But Barrington Pasha was in a state of desperation. He had failed to gather in that nest of conspirators who were determined to kill the King. And of Rodgers he had heard nothing. The fellow had been swallowed up in the slums of Cairo.

With the guns still booming their royal salute, the King advanced toward the waiting white-enamed automobile. The stiff puppet-like chauffeur saluted, and with a gentle pressure of his hand, the automobile purred into action. The King, who was in uniform and wearing many decorations, stepped in.

"Your Majesty!" entreated Barrington Pasha.

The King turned to him. "Yes?"

"I think, sir, as I said, it would be wise to drive direct to the Palace instead of taking the circuitous route arranged."

The King looked at him.

"Why? Again, why?"

EVEN the monocle trembled at that moment.

"Because, Your Majesty, I cannot guarantee the safety of the long route. There is a plot."

"A plot, eh?" The King regarded him steadily. "To kill me?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

There was silence while the guns continued to boom out the salute and the lines of troops stood stiffly at the present.

Something like a sad smile crossed the swarthy face of King Saad.

"When one is a king," he murmured, "there is always a plot to kill. I am not afraid. Kings are born to be assassinated. And it has been promised the people of Cairo that I shall motor the circuitous route, eh?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then I insist, Barrington, that we take the circuitous route."

Barrington Pasha saluted stiffly.

"Very well, Your Majesty. You are a brave man, sir."

The King smiled, and lounged back easily in the seat of the automobile.

Barrington Pasha was about to join him, when there was a shout of disturbance in the distance. Across the deserted square hemmed in by troops staggered a red-headed Arab in a blue burnous, and at his side, a boy in a velvet suit. They approached the white-enamed car.

Barrington Pasha put out a gloved hand.

"Who are you, fellow?" he demanded in Arabic. Then the monocle fell away from his face as he recognized Red Rodgers of the Red Sea.

Rodgers approached the King.

"Your Majesty," he began, "there is no time to explain. But I beg that you will permit me—and this boy—to ride with you in your car."

The King gazed at this red-haired Arab with interest.

"Who are you?"

"Paul Rodgers, sir. Intelligence."

"Ah!"

The King was beginning to understand.

"But the boy?" he asked. He smiled at the little figure in the velvet suit whose big dark eyes gazed wonderingly at the glittering decorations.

"A friend!" said Rodgers simply.

The King leaned forward.

"Leave the boy," he remarked. "I cannot permit him to ride with me. There is danger along this route."

Rodgers dropped his voice to a whisper.

"I realize that danger, Your Majesty. And I would say that I will answer for the boy with my own life. I beg of you, sir."

The King hesitated.

"I would like to ride with you, sir," said the boy suddenly, in a frightened whisper.

The King smiled at that.

"Come along, then," he said. "You shall."

And he himself lifted the boy into the white automobile. At the same time Rodgers, in his tattered burnous, calmly seated himself opposite the King.

"You assure me, Rodgers, that this boy, is in no danger?" asked Saad.

"Your Majesty," replied Red Rodgers, "he is safer than if he were at home with his mother."

BARRINGTON PASHA gave a signal. Two motorcyclists sputtered into action. They slithered away into the dust, advance messengers of the King's progress,

The mounted troops wheeled into position. They galloped in perfect formation. The white car glided behind them. Then more mounted troops, more automobiles. Then Barrington Pasha, sitting stiffly erect, gray with anxiety.

A roar greeted him as they passed from the station square into the street.

Windows, balconies, roofs—all were alive with the people of Cairo roaring a welcome to the King. Green and yellow flags fluttered against the sunlit sky. Khaki-clad troops lining the route presented arms to a continuous shouting of commands.

The route followed the old wall of Cairo. Saad waved his hand gently in response to those roaring thousands. Opposite him sat Red Rodgers, his gray eyes searching the line of houses, open windows, doorways, more windows, flat roofs, and crowded stands which passed like a dream panorama before him. And the boy in the velvet suit sat ecstatic at the side of the King, only occasionally helping himself to a lump of Turkish delight from the box on his knees.

Ten minutes passed—fifteen. Still the sunlike roar of the crowd was unbroken by any *rat-tat-tat-tat* of machine-gun. Another five minutes, and the procession would be entering the Palace. Red Rodgers, his nerves tense, gave a side-long glance at the King and marveled. The smile on that swarthy face was still there. The hand still waved a salute. There was not a tremor of fear in the man.

Then, above the roar of the crowd, he heard a woman's scream. He looked up! An old, tottering house of old Cairo. And a broken shutter had swung open from the blind and dusty front of the house, revealing a little group crouching there.

Rodgers saw only a pair of jet eyes, staring with incredulity and hatred at the white automobile. One slim hand with its scarlet nails was held above her veiled head. He knew that when the hand came down, the machine-gun and automatics would spit forth death. But it was as though she was turned to stone. Her eyes had seen the boy Yama. The hand was still poised tremblingly above her head. And the next moment the white automobile with its smiling King, its tense figure in blue burnous, and a boy who sat with Turkish delight in his sticky fingers, passed on.

A moment later and they were entering the gates of the Palace of Abdin.

TWO hours afterward, clad in white ducks, and with a pith helmet hiding his flaming hair, Red Rodgers sprawled comfortably in a cane-chair on the veranda of Shepheard's Hotel. He was sipping a cool drink with evident enjoy-

ment, and idly listening to the chatter of Barrington Pasha, seated at the same table.

"Well, you pulled it off successfully," said Barrington. "But I must admit that your attempted assassination of me was just a little too real to be really comfortable."

"I'm sorry," grinned Rodgers. "But it had to be done."

"It was either damned good shooting or damned bad shooting," grunted Barrington. "I can't say which."

"Neither can I," admitted Rodgers.

"And that blackguard Hassan Bey is now under lock and key," continued Barrington. "You've done us a great service, Rodgers."

"I only hope our friend Hassan is occupying the same cell in which he placed me," growled the red-haired one.

"He is," Barrington adjusted his monocle. "And now what about the boy Yama?"

"He should be at home by now."

Rodgers raised his glass, to drain it. As he did so, a folded piece of paper was revealed beneath it. Idly he picked it up. To his surprise, his own name, Paul Rodgers, was scrawled across it.

He unfolded it. There was a penciled message, written in English.

You devil! There will be a terrible reckoning for this.

He laughed, and tossed the note over to Barrington Pasha.

"Love from the Woman of Antioch!"

"And what next?" asked Barrington, when he had read the message.

Those gray eyes narrowed. An idea was developing somewhere beneath the flaming red hair. He rose abruptly.

"I'm going to search for a piano," he said. "There's a certain theme haunting me, and— Excuse me, one moment."

He walked into the hotel. Barrington Pasha waited. Fifteen minutes. There was no sign of Rodgers. He called the head-waiter. The fellow had not seen him. Barrington Pasha adjusted his monocle with a grunt of impatience.

"A queer devil!" he muttered, and stamped down the steps to where his car waited.

And no one saw Red Rodgers in Cairo again that night, or for the next six months. He seemed to have vanished into the thin, sun-scorched air of the great city.

*"Half the distance
to the goal-line,"
demanded the op-
posing captain of
the referee. "That
was just slugging!"
"No," the official
laughed, "just nec-
essary roughness!"
Here is a vivid and
exciting story of a
football game—as it
is sometimes played.*

By
**FRANCIS
WALLACE**



Illustrated
by E. H. Kuhlhoff

Rough Going

IT began, as such things often do, by chatter back and forth across the line of scrimmage; for twenty-two college football-players are apt to include a few glib tongues. The rangy Tech center, scorning a headguard, eating action as though it were beefsteak, sneered—if a hearty boy can really sneer.

"Give it to Handsome, again—I like his pretty eyes."

"Okay, fresh guy," the Wellington quarter snapped.

And he did. The tall, rugged fullback roared over the middle for four yards.

"There he was, fresh guy—where were you?"

"Send him back, you half-pint!"

"Okay, fresh guy!"

The fullback said nothing, made no move which might tip the play. His eyes were steady.

He went back over guard for six yards more. The opposition had been tricked. The little quarterback barked insultingly:

"Who's playing center over there, any-how?"

"Try again and you'll find out!" the big fellow snarled.

"No, fresh guy! If you look too bad

we might lose you—and you're playing a great game for us. That right end looks friendly."

The Tech line shifted to the right—and the big fullback came hurtling back through center.

But this time the strategy didn't work; the rangy defender of that sector had sensed the maneuver and was waiting; he hit brutally; and when the fullback got up, blood was smeared across his face. He said nothing.

"Play that on your saxophone, pretty boy!" the center challenged.

In the huddle the bantam quarter said: "Used his hands, didn't he?"

"Yes," answered Paul Fortune, the fullback. "Let it go."

"Let it go—hell! If they want to play rough, let's go."

"I'll take that baby," promised Andrews, the big Wellington tackle. The game was brightening up for him—he loved the rough stuff. "Shoot fifty-eight over my way—so I can take a sideswipe at that center."

The center got up—swearing, limping.

"Don't leave us, sweetheart," the bantam quarter shrieked, "we need you too much."

Back of the line the Tech right half-back promised: "Okay. Wait till that Andrews comes in to block the next punt—"

A little later Andrews came in to block a punt; the right halfback, blocking, let him have an elbow in the nose. Andrews promised: "All right, punk—better keep your arms high next time you come over my way with that ball."

The merry war went on—catch-as-catch-can, protect yourself at all times. Paul Fortune, the big sophomore full-back of Wellington, took the brunt of

what sort of game it had become, cheered. When Junkins hit 'em, they were hit.

Paul Fortune walked to the bench, defeat written all over him, one hand rubbing his side. Substitutes gave him quiet consolation—or started to; but Darby Dunn, the volatile little coach, interrupted:

"Pretty rough going in there?"

"Yes."

"Didn't like it very well, did you?"

The tall boy stiffened; his lower lip quivered, and his eyes showed hurt—fell before Darby's glare. The coach



Paul Fortune went off tackle into the open, for eighteen yards, more than redeeming the penalty.

it; he was the chief ground-gainer, and they cut him down; and when they got him down they added an elbow in the ribs, a shoe in the face, a twist of the knee for lagniappe—just to see if this new star could take it. He wasn't doing so well.

"Next time show that center your stiff-arm," Andrews said testily. "Give it back to 'em, kid, or they'll never lay off."

Paul Fortune nodded—said nothing, did nothing.

"I guess he aint got that yellow hair for nothin'," Andrews said guardedly to the quarterback. "Just another sweet-heart!"

The quarterback nodded.

"Next time the water-boy comes out, tell Darby to send in Junkins—he'll take care of these birds."

And presently Junkins came running out—a chunky blockhouse of a boy, lacking Fortune's speed and cleverness, but very tough in there. The stands, sensing

grunted and gave his attention to the game. Paul Fortune found a place near the end of the bench, huddled in a blanket; the substitutes kept their eyes on the field, pretending that nothing had happened. They were sorry for Paul Fortune; but a man had to be tough in there to play for Darby Dunn.

"Go on in, Fortune," Darby called. "We won't need you any more today."

The boy walked, head down, toward the gymnasium. The crowd was cheering Junkins—for Junkins was wrecking them in there as they popped through the line.

THE students in English II—poetry and the essay, taught on alternate days—had been seated alphabetically.

On the following Monday morning at nine o'clock, the chair allotted to Paul Fortune, well up front, was vacant. He was a good student, usually on time.

When his name was reached in the roll-call, there was the slightest murmur

around the large room. A few minutes later Paul Fortune entered, looked steadily at the group of faces, dropped his eyes and went directly to his seat. He carried no hat, and his yellow hair was parted carefully; his blue shirt was fresh-

The library was a two-furlong dash across the quadrangle, under russet trees, through swishing leaves under foot. The girl's dress was brown as the autumn; the tan of an outdoor summer still lingered on her face. She matched his



ly laundered; he wore a gray tweed suit and looked much neater than the average athlete.

Polly Dunn, the coach's daughter, sat among the *D*'s, in the row ahead. During the hour she gave Paul Fortune more attention than the professor received. The boy was nervous, self-conscious; he recited poorly, which was unusual. Once his eyes caught her sidelong glance; she smiled as a friend and he nodded. His eyes were clear blue and his features clean-cut. He had a calmness, a repose, an intelligence which fitted him well.

In the hall, after class, he was hurrying by, alone. She contrived to match steps with him. At the door the crowd thinned and they were near each other.

"Hello, Paul." Her voice was warm and friendly. "Which way?"

"Hello, Polly." He was ill at ease. "I've got a ten o'clock at the library."

"I'm on my way there."

"I didn't know you were in that class."

"I'm not; just a little reference work."

stride. She was gay. At the library steps they were laughing. Other students turned to watch them.

He went down the steps into the basement classroom. She climbed to the broad oak doors, waited a few minutes there and walked all the way back across the campus alone. Her thoughtful eyes seemed to count the fallen leaves.

That afternoon, when the varsity reported for practice, Paul Fortune was dropped to the third team. Darby Dunn made no comment, no explanation. None was needed. Everybody on the squad knew that Paul Fortune was being disciplined. His courage was questioned. He had weight, speed, cleverness, acumen, the equipment of a superior fighting man; but a football monogram was, above all things, a badge of courage.

Throughout the week of preparation for Thorndyke, the tall, strong boy went through the training routine with the third eleven while Junkins worked with the varsity and another sophomore

moved up to the shock troops. The men on the squad discussed it quietly, when at all, but maintained the pretense that nothing unusual had occurred while Fortune was at hand. The boys on the third team included him in their chatter as though he had always been one of them. They liked Paul Fortune and were sorry for him, wondering what would come of it. To question an athlete's courage was to question his honor as a man.



DURING that week Darby Dunn by no act or word recognized that Paul Fortune was on the field. The boy went on quietly, speaking no word to the coach.

But every morning, after English II, the coach's daughter walked across the leafy campus to the library with the boy her father was punishing. The school wondered what would come of it; waited for Saturday afternoon and the Thorndyke game.

It was a hard contest; neither Junkins nor the green sophomore was able to break loose for one of the climax runs which had made Paul Fortune a quick sensation, a promise of future glory for himself and Wellington. But Paul Fortune sat on the bench throughout the battle, huddled in a blanket, watching the grim struggle of his team for its one-touchdown victory.

When it was over he walked with the other substitutes to the gymnasium; removed his clean uniform casually and hung it in his locker; took a shower which he didn't need; spoke to nobody; hurried out. The other boys were glad when he had gone; the situation was too embarrassing; it was no longer possible to ignore it. . . . The morning papers generously explained that Fortune had been kept out of the game by an injured leg and that Darby Dunn was saving his brilliant young star for the important contest with State which would end the season on Thanksgiving Day.

Darby Dunn was king of the campus at Wellington, his deeds regal, his words pontifical—his record justified this position and his personality secured it; but in his own home he was just a husband and father and very glad of that fact. Darby came home to relax, to be natural, to shed the artifice and the pretense which were necessary for his rôle as a public character. He had hoped to become the father of a boy, preferably a quarterback as he had been; but Polly

had done very well; after he had become acquainted with her he admitted that no complete All-American team could quite replace this one combination pastel femininity and masculine intensity which was his daughter; and Darby had plenty of boys on his football squad.

The evening of the Thorndyke game Darby Dunn dallied with his dinner. He was seldom moody, rarely after a victory. His wife and daughter respected his temper and were quiet through the meal. At its conclusion he took the football extras of the evening papers and made himself comfortable in the library, preparing for his weekend pleasure of playing the game over again in retrospect and of picking out reportorial errors as every football coach likes to do. After awhile Polly came in for inspection as he encouraged her to do. His daughter was pretty and Darby loved to see her in proper raiment.

"Who's the unfortunate tonight?" he asked.

"One of your boys."

His eyes wrinkled slightly at the corners as they always did when he was pleased.

"Picking a he-man for a change?"

"An all-round man, Daddy."

"Going to the dance, I suppose? Don't keep him out late."

"You know me better than that."

Darby grunted. "Who is it?"

"Paul Fortune."

"What?" Darby exploded. His face grew livid, his eyes wild as when a half-back missed a signal. Polly waited calmly but the doorbell rang before Darby could say more.

"That's Paul now—be human," Mrs. Dunn advised. Polly went to the door. "I'll be ready in a moment, Paul. Just sit down."

Paul Fortune glanced about cautiously. Darby's wife went out to greet him. "Hello, Paul."

"Good evening, Mrs. Dunn."

"Oh, Darby!" she called. "Paul Fortune is here."

Darby came out from the library, carrying the sport page.

The boy eyed him apprehensively but steadily.

"Hello, Paul," Darby said casually. "Glad to see you."

"Thanks, Mr. Dunn."

Polly came down the stairs and three pairs of eyes found pleasure in focusing upon her. She kissed her father and mother.

After they had gone Darby exploded. "Well, of all the things I ever heard of! Doesn't she know—" He stopped.

"Yes—she knows you're humiliating that boy before the whole school."

He scowled.

"What do you mean, the whole school?"

"Surely, Darby, you didn't expect a situation like that to be kept quiet. Everybody is talking about it."

"But my own daughter—"

"Should she humiliate him too?"

"Well, I get enough second-guessing from the papers and faculty and alumni without having my own family butting in."

"But what has she done? He's a nice boy, isn't he?"

"Too nice—that's his trouble."

"You're not fair to the boy. Give him another chance and he'll show you."

"He's shown me plenty already—and this proves it."

"What proves it?"

"This. Whenever the women start defending a guy he's always a sissy."

But a little later, walking through the near-by woods with the other member of the minority party,—his police dog,—Darby got a different slant.

"If Dot and the kid like him maybe he's got it, Bozo. I like him too—that's what made me sore. It's not easy to cut a kid like that, Bozo, but what ya gonna do? If he were my own boy I'd have to do the same thing. If he's got it, that'll bring it out; if he hasn't got it—I guess everybody can't be police dogs like us, anyhow."



The next morning at breakfast Darby Dunn assumed as effective a mantle of pathos as could be draped around his vigorous personality; his eyes drooped and his voice was almost plaintive as he answered, in monosyllables, all questions put to him. His wife, accustomed to Darby's stratagems, smiled over her coffee-cup at Polly; a smile which informed her that the lord of the manor considered his dignity horribly outraged by one he had trusted.

"Come on, Dad," Polly cajoled, "don't be like that."

Darby turned the page of his paper without comment.

"You know," the girl continued, "you've been unfair."

Her father dropped the paper quickly. "I'm never unfair."

"Then why didn't you play him Saturday?"

"Maybe if he'd have come to me instead of you I would have."

"He didn't come to me."

"How about that dance?"

"I asked him—it was a sorority party."

Darby, disgustedly, returned to his sport page. "Never thought you'd do that, Polly."

"What did I do so awful?"

"Passed up all the he-men for a cream puff."

"I don't think he is."

"He dogged it, didn't he?"

"Maybe—I don't know; but even if he did, what would that prove?"

"It'd prove he was yellow, wouldn't it?"

"Don't point at me, Dad, please. It wouldn't prove to me he was yellow."

Darby shifted his attack. "What does he say? What's his alibi?"

"I don't know. We haven't talked about it."

Darby grunted. "He's got nerve enough to come around here though—he's brave enough for that."

"He was only being polite, Dad."

"He's polite on the field, too—that's his trouble."

"Must a boy be a roughneck to play for you?"

"No—but he's got to be tough in there."

"But why?" Her voice was sharper.

"He's got to protect himself! Say, what's your interest in this cream puff, anyhow?"

"Oh, Dad—don't be crude. Maybe I'm just trying to find out the same thing you are; only I'm trying to be fair."

"I'm fair too, young lady—fairer than you think."

"You humiliate him before the school; make him a target for everybody's eyes and lips and gossip; and you call that fair."

"Yes—I call it fair. That kid's been getting by on his size until now; but the competition's getting keener; he's up against class, now—up against guys who will knock him down if they think he'll take it. He needs a jolt—I gave it to him; if he's got the stuff he'll show it."

"If you don't break his spirit first."

"I'm just trying to see if he has one, Polly," her father said kindly, softly; "and if you're really interested in Paul try to get it across to him that this football is nothing to the beating he'll have to take when he gets out of school."



Polly didn't know how much she was really interested. Paul Fortune had just been another football man to her before his chastisement had called upon her generous nature to atone for what she considered her father's brutality. Then she had found many things to like about the boy—the very qualities which her father criticized: gentleness, courtesy, consideration.

She reconstructed his background: an only child, son of a librarian and a music-teacher; that much he had told her. It explained his interest in and knowledge of the classics, his talent for almost any musical instrument. Polly saw him growing up among nice little boys like himself. His body and equipment for football was an unexplained phenomenon but a fact. Now he was playing with tough boys for the first time. He would have to learn how to be tough in there with them.

At least, she hoped fervently, that he could. It was nice for a handsome, talented boy to be nice; but if he really were *too* nice—

Polly was afraid she couldn't become really interested in a boy who was too nice. There was nothing she could do about it either; nothing but wait, like everybody else, including the boy himself. A few days before the Thanksgiving game with State, Darby moved him up to the second string, which indicated to everybody that Paul Fortune was still on probation but would get his chance.

Paul walked home with Polly after the pre-game student rally. They were very

quiet; there was the powerful State team to be met; there was this other thing—and there came still another.

As he was leaving she spoke softly, earnestly: "Paul—I hope you knock 'em cold tomorrow."

Their eyes met, for the first time, she thought. His were hurt, misty. "You've been sweet."

Impulsively, she kissed him; whispered, while he stood amazed: "Now, go show 'em for me."

She hurried inside, past her father and mother, without a word. Darby went to the window, watched the springy step of the figure which went down the sidewalk.

Darby smiled.

"What is it, Daddy?" his wife asked.

"I'm not sure—but it looks as if we may have a fullback tomorrow." . . .

The State contest quickly developed into another battle between bad little boys—one of those games which, if not actually dirty, severely strain the description of "hard clean football" which the coaches like to apply.

Polly, sitting with her mother in the family box just back of the dugout, leaned her chin on the cement top rail, it seemed, and watched. The sideline was only ten yards away. She could see the whites of their eyes when they came close; could hear their comment; almost feel the dull, bone-crunching sound of colliding bodies. This was the acid test of young manhood—football at its most vicious.

Carlson, the bantam quarterback, was barking raucously, eyes batting contemptuously at the men across the line of scrimmaging; Andrews, the big he-man tackle, was all but licking his chops in savage delight at this opportunity for carnival of the sort he loved.

Paul Fortune was deadly serious; silent, desperate. The boy was trying—trying so hard; he dug in his toes, threw himself at the line, tackled perfectly; his mates were encouraging him, doing what they could; Paul was playing a good game.

But Polly knew it wasn't his best; he wasn't really Paul Fortune, the star of the game, as he should have been; he wasn't getting away. There was an essential difference between him and most of the others, particularly Andrews. The he-man tackle was like a man afire with combat. Paul certainly wasn't that.

He wasn't holding back—he was trying; but he wasn't giving all of himself

either. The play came near the sidelines again; Paul intentionally stepped out of bounds to get away from the bad lands—to make a play possible on either side. The State center dumped him; plainly gave him the knee in the ribs. Everybody saw it. Paul merely gave him a look which plainly said that he thought the State man was unfair.

Carlson, the cocky quarterback, would have slain him with his eyes; torn him with sarcasm. Andrews, the he-man tackle, would have tried his courage with a promise of revenge.

Anger suddenly overwhelmed the girl; at the State man who had kneed Paul; at Paul for taking it so meekly, so gentlemanly. He was too nice; too polite. Hardly knowing what she was saying, caring not at all, she stood up in the box and cried to the boys eight yards away.

"Oh, Paul,"—her voice dripped disgust,—"why don't you take a slug at that roughneck?"

Paul Fortune stood gaping. The roughneck laughed and called to Polly: "What's the phone-number, baby? I'll make you like it too."

In plain view of sixty thousand people Paul Fortune started a right cross that found a perfect mark on the roughneck's chin and toppled him neatly as a bullet might have. The referee quickly began to pace off yardage—so flagrant a violation could not go unpunished; but he stopped at fifteen yards.

"Half the distance to the goal-line," the State captain claimed, "and disqualification! That was just slugging."

"No," the official laughed, "just necessary roughness."

Polly, amazed as everybody else, sat back and watched while the crowd buzzed. The State man was up, feeling his jaw. Paul's mates were crowding about him, slapping him on the back. Andrews, the he-man tackle, shook his hand, walked away, came back and did it again. Darby Dunn was shaking his fist at Paul, his signal of approval.

The teams lined up. Paul Fortune went off tackle, into the open, twisting, whirling, stiff-arming savagely, dodging, for eighteen yards, more than redeeming the penalty. Darby looked back at his daughter and laughed.

Paul's voice came barking up from the scrimmage:

"Jarrett around your side, Tommy—get that big ham!"

But Paul took no chances. He himself sped to that end of the line and dived between two interferers to get the big ham—got him as a butcher gets a steer.

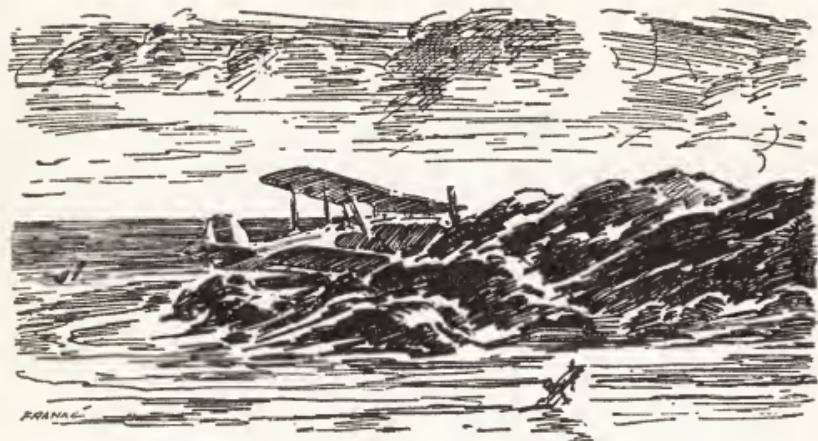
"Well," Mrs. Darby Dunn said casually, "it looks as if we have a fullback."

"All he needed," Polly answered, nonchalantly enough, "was to get mad."

"I wonder," her mother replied.



In plain view of sixty thousand people Paul Fortune started a right cross that found a perfect mark.



When Worlds Collide

The Story Thus Far:

TWO tiny streaks upon a photographic plate—no more than that; but to the scientists they announced terrific catastrophe; for they were pictures of two stranger stars hurtling out of space toward collision with this world.

Professor Bronson in his South African observatory discovered them first. And when he had made repeated photographs and checked his calculations beyond risk of error, he entrusted the plates to a special messenger, the airmail pilot David Ransdell, who flew with them across the length of Africa and across to France to make connections with the steamer for New York.

There Ransdell delivered the precious plates to Cole Hendron of the American Electric and Power Corporation, recognized as the world's greatest physicist. And thus was born the League of the Last Days; for Hendron confirmed Bronson's observations and calculations; but in order to prevent world-wide panic and hysteria he at first gave out the news only to a selected group of the ablest scientists, men best qualified to plan what—if anything—could be done to meet what seemed inevitable doom.

To one man who was not a scientist Hendron confided the facts: to that handsome and athletic young broker Tony Drake, who was deeply in love

By EDWIN BALMER

Illustrated by

with Hendron's lovely daughter Eve—and who saw with natural jealousy that Eve was attracted by the daring messenger from Africa, David Ransdell.

Later, when leaking rumors had compelled a preliminary public statement of the facts, Hendron confided in more detail to Tony:

"Those specks were moving so that they will enter our solar system, and one of them will then come into collision with our world.

"Before the encounter, both of these moving bodies—Bronson Alpha and Bronson Beta—will first pass us close by and cause tides that will rise six hundred feet over us, from New York to San Francisco—and, of course, over all sea-coasts everywhere.

"And the passing of the Bronson Bodies will cause earthquakes on a scale unimaginable; half the inland cities will be shaken down. Perhaps a fifth of the people will survive the first passing of the Bronson bodies.

"I suppose, after all, it doesn't make much difference whether or not we succeed in moving a few million more peo-



The tremendous story of the Doomsday wrought upon the earth by an onrushing stranger planet—and of the dawn after Doomsday when another stranger world offered haven to the darling.

and PHILIP WYLIE

Joseph Franké

ple into the safer areas. They will be safe for only eight months more, in any case. For eight months later, we meet Bronson Beta on the other side of the sun. And no one on earth will escape.

"But there is a chance that a few individuals may leave the earth and live. For ahead of the sphere that will destroy us, there spins a world like our own which some of us—*some* of us—may reach and be safe."

Later Tony talked it over with Eve. "Remember Belshazzar's feast in the Bible, Tony," she said. "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone."

"Isn't that a good deal like what we've—most of us—been doing, Tony?"

"And remember the handwriting on the wall? '*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.* Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. And in that night was Belshazzar slain.'

"It is something very like that which is happening to us now, Tony; only the Finger, instead of writing again on the wall, this time has taken to writing in

the sky—over our heads. It has traced two little streaks in the sky—two objects moving toward us, where nothing ought to move; and the message of one of them is perfectly plain.

"*'Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting,'* that one says to us on this world. But what does the other streak say?

"That is the strange one, Tony. For that is the afterthought of God—the chance of rescue He is sending us!"

As the news spread, there were of course all manner of riots and public disturbances. And the various governments took such steps as they could to move their people away from tidal and volcanic perils. Meanwhile, Hendron started the building of his projected Space Ship at a work-camp in Michigan; and Tony was made a personnel officer to recruit the best brains of the country to join the League of the Last Days and help in their desperate project. . . .

Now Bronson Alpha and its sister stranger from space became visible to the naked eye. And terrific tides began to drive out the people of the coastal cities. (*The story continues in detail:*)

"LOOK down, now," said a different voice, "at the street." It was a young man's voice, carefully controlled,

but in spite of its constraint, ringing with an unusually vibrant and vital quality.

Tony looked about at the speaker before he gazed down; and he recognized a recruit whom he had not himself selected: It was Eliot James, an Englishman from Oxford, and a poet. By profession and by nature, he was the most impractical of all the company; and one of the most attractive, in spite of his affectation—if it was that—of a small beard. The beard became him. He was tall, broad-shouldered, aquiline in feature, brown.

The baleful moonlight of the Bronson Bodies glinted up from the street.

"Water," some one said.

"Yes; that's the tide. It's flowing in from the cross-streets from the Hudson, and from the East River too."

"There's some coming up from the Battery along the avenues—see the flow down there!"

"How high will it rise tonight? Oh, how high?"

"Not above the bridges tonight. They're not in danger—tonight. But of course the power-houses will go."

"And the tunnels will be filled?"

"Of course."

"There are people down there, wading in the street! . . . Why did they stay? They've been warned enough."

"Why did we stay? We gave the warning."

"We've business here."

"So had they—they supposed, and as important to them as we imagined ours to be to us. Besides, they're safe enough tonight. Just that few of them. They can climb three stories in almost any building and be safe. The tide ebbs, of course, in six hours."

"Then comes again higher!"

"Yes—much higher. For the Bronson Bodies are rushing at us now."

"Exactly how," asked Eliot James, "do they look through the telescope?"

"The big one—Bronson Beta," replied Jack Taylor, as they all looked up from the street, "not very different from before. It seems to be gaseous, chiefly—it always was chiefly gaseous, unlike the earth and Mars, but like Jupiter and Saturn and Neptune. Its approach to the sun has increased the temperature of its envelope, but has brought out no details of its geography, if you could call it that. Bronson Beta offers us no real surface, as such. It seems to be a great globe with a massive nucleus surrounded by an immense atmosphere. What we see is only the outer surface of the atmosphere."

"Could it ever have been inhabited?" the poet asked.

"In no such sense as we understand the word. For one thing, if we found ourselves on Bronson Beta, we would never find any surface to live on. There is probably no sudden alteration of material such as exists on the earth when air stops and land and water begin."

"But the other world—Bronson Alpha—is different."

"Very different from its companion up there, but not so different from our world, it seems. It has a surface we can see, with air and clouds in its atmosphere. The clouds shift or disappear and form again; but there are fixed details which do not change, and which prove a surface crust exists. The atmosphere was frozen solid in the journey through space, but the sun has thawed

Strange sounds rose from the flood—the outrush of air, the inrush of the tide.



out the air and has started, at least, on thawing out the seas."

"You're sure there are seas too?"

"There are great spaces that seem to be seas, that satisfy every visual and spectroscopic test of seas."

"Have you seen," asked the poet, "anything like—cities?"

"Cities?"

"The ruins of cities, I mean. That globe seems to be so much like the earth; and sometimes it has had its sun. It lived in the sunshine of a star that was an octillion, octillion miles away. I thought just now, looking at it, that perhaps on it were cities like this, where people once watched the coming of whatever pulled them loose from their sun, and dropped them into the black mouth of space."

Some of the company about him were looking up and listening; others paid no attention to him. He did not care; a few had shared his feeling; and among them was Eve, who stood near him.

"Would you rather we went that way?" she said to him.

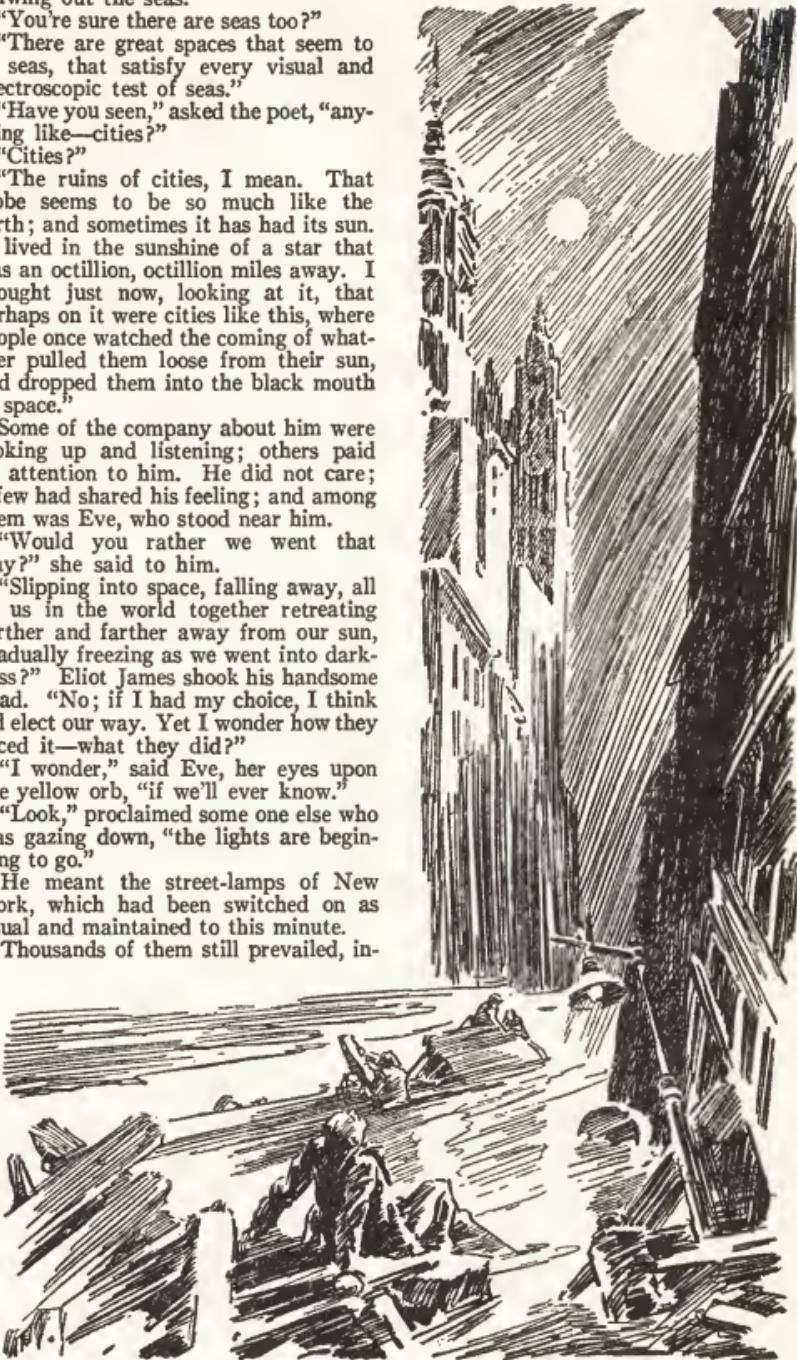
"Slipping into space, falling away, all of us in the world together retreating farther and farther away from our sun, gradually freezing as we went into darkness?" Eliot James shook his handsome head. "No; if I had my choice, I think I'd elect our way. Yet I wonder how they faced it—what they did?"

"I wonder," said Eve, her eyes upon the yellow orb, "if we'll ever know."

"Look," proclaimed some one else who was gazing down, "the lights are beginning to go."

He meant the street-lamps of New York, which had been switched on as usual and maintained to this minute.

Thousands of them still prevailed, in-



dead; but a huge oblong, which had been lighted before, was darkened now.

"The flood has caught the conduits!" And with the word, the little gleaming rows which etched the streets throughout another district died; but the rest burned on in beautiful defiance.

The city officially was abandoned; but men remained. Some men, whatever the warning, whatever the danger, refused to surrender; they stuck to their duties and to their services to the last. Some men and some boys; and some women and girls too. And so, on this night, New York had lights; it kept communication—telephone and telegraph too.

But now another pattern of blocks disappeared; Brooklyn went black. Beacons burned—airplane-guides and lighthouses. Ships, having their own electric installations, could be seen seeking the sea.

That too, thought Tony, was only a splendid gesture; yet the sight of the ships, like the stubborn persistence of the lights, threw a tingle in his blood and made him more proud of his people. They couldn't give up—some of them! To leave the ships at dock to take the tide that now was flooding in, was certain destruction. What use to steer them out to sea? For what would they be saved? Yet captains and crews could be found to steer and stoke them.

MORE blocks were black; the light from the awful orbs of the Bronson Bodies slanted sharp across the streets, their shadows unbroken by the last lamps of the city's defiance.

Now the street gave up sounds—the rush of water as the loud edge of the flood advanced filling the last floor of the cañons between the buildings. All over the world at the seaboard it must be the same, except that some cities already were overswept and this tide was now retiring. To rise higher yet twelve hours later; and then still higher!

Eliot James moved closer to Eve. "What does it do to you?" he said.

She answered: "Too much."

"Yes," he said. "And it's only begun?"

"It's not begun," whispered Eve. "This—this is really nothing. Tonight, the waters will merely rise over the lower buildings of the city, and then subside. We will all leave in the ebb tide."

"Which, I suppose, will drain the rivers dry? There was clearly no practical purpose for staying this twelve hours longer;

but I am glad we did. I would not have escaped this sensation. I wonder where the people have gone who also stayed for it—whom we saw in the streets awhile ago?"

Eve attempted no answer; nor did Tony.

"I imagine," persisted the poet, "they are also glad they remained. It is a new intoxication—annihilation. It multiplies every emotion."

Tony so fully agreed with him that he drew Eve away. He made the excuse that, her father having retired, she also should sleep; but having taken her away from the others, he kept her to himself.

"Eve, we've got to marry!"

"My dear, what would marriage mean now?"

"But you feel it—don't you?"

"Need for you—"

"As never before, Eve?"

"Yes, Tony. It's as he said—oh, my dear! The waters overwhelm you—the flood rising and rising, with scarcely a sound, and those two yellow disks doing it! And no one can stop them! They're coming on, Tony! They're coming on, to lift the waters higher and higher; they're coming on to crack open the shell of the earth! Tony—oh, hold me!"

"I have you, Eve. You have me! Here we are, two of us together. . . . They're in pairs wherever they are in New York tonight, Eve. Didn't you see them? Wherever they waited, a woman waited with a man. There's only one answer to—annihilation. That's it."

"Tony!"

"My dear—"

"What's that. . . . Your name? Some one's searching for you. A message seems to have come."

"How could a message come?"

Yet in the yellow light on the roof, they could see a uniformed boy; and Tony stepped out to meet him.

He had arrived at the building an hour ago, the boy was saying; with the elevators stopped, he had climbed to the roof by the stairs.

Tony took his telegram, tore it open and, in the light of the two baleful Bodies, he read:

MRS. MADELINE DRAKE AND SERVANTS MURDERED BY LOOTERS WHO RAIDED SEVERAL CONNECTICUT FARMS AND ESTATES LATE TODAY.

The paper dropped from Tony's fingers. He slumped to a bench and covered his face with his hands.

He felt Eve's hand and looked up, utter despair on his face.

"Read that." He saw that she held his telegram.

"I have read it. Tony—"

"I should have gone to her; or I should have taken her away—but I believed it best to leave her in her home as long as possible. I was going to her tomorrow. Now—now—"

She checked his flow of recrimination, sitting down on the bench beside him and reaching up to smooth his hair as if he were only a child. "You couldn't have done a thing, Tony. This might have happened wherever you had taken her. All over the country, bands of men have been running like wolves; and today they became more merciless."

Tony leaped to his feet. "I'll go to her, and find them, and kill them!"

"You'll never find them, Tony. They'll have moved on; and no one will have stayed to tell you who they were. . . . Besides, Tony, they'll be punished without any one raising a hand. Perhaps already they are dead."

"But I must go to her!"

"Of course; and I'll go with you; but we must wait for the tide to fall."

"Tide?" He stalked to the edge of the roof and stared down; for strangely, he had forgotten it. Now he saw the streets running full, not with the foul water of the harbor, but with a clean green flood. The Bronson Bodies lit it almost to dim daylight.

Tony gazed up at them, aghast. "My mind, my mind can understand it, Eve; but good God, she was my mother! *Murdered!* Cornered somewhere in her house—my home where I was a little boy, and where I ran to her with my triumphs and my troubles, Eve. I wonder where she was, in what room they struck her down, the damned cowards—" He did not finish. He was racked by a succession of great sobs.

Eve caught his hand and brought him again to the bench. Still they were alone, and she sat close beside him, holding him in her arms.

"We'll go to her, Tony, as soon as we can. . . . This is happening to everybody. It's horrible, fiendish, unbelievable—and inevitable. It was frightful that they killed her; and yet probably, Tony, they did it instantly, and surely without agony for her; so perhaps it is much better that she went now, than that she should live through the next months as we know they will be—months



Tony beat one man down with the butt, and with the barrel cowed the other.

of starvation and savagery and horror; leading only to the final catastrophe."

Tony looked bleakly at the girl. "Yes, I know that; but I can feel only that they killed her."

For a long time they said nothing more; then they arose, returned to the parapet and gazed down at the water.

Strange sounds rose with the flow of the flood; the collapse of windows under the weight of water; the outrush of air, the inrush of the tide. Away on other streets not citadelled by the massive towers whose steel skeletons reached down to the living rock, the walls were beginning to fall. Smoke

drifted like a mist between the buildings as the water, the final enemy of fire, began to cause conflagrations.

Somewhere it "shorted" an electric current, perhaps; somewhere else it had sent a family fleeing before a fire which ought first to have been extinguished; or the water itself entered into chemical combinations which caused heat. Doubtless many a hand deliberately set the flames. But there was no wind tonight; so the flood isolated each fire; here and there a building burned; but the huge terraced towers of Manhattan stood dark and silent, intact.

"You must try to sleep, Tony."

"And you!"

"Till the tide goes out; yes, Tony. I'll try, if you will." She kissed him, and they went in together, to separate at the door of the room where she was to sleep. Tony went on to the bed allotted him, and he lay down without undressing. In the next room Cole Hendron was actually asleep.

Tony, trying not to think, occupied himself with separating the sounds which reached him through the opened window—a woman's shriek, a bass voice booming a strange song, a flute.

Some one, seated above the flood, was piping in the unnatural light of the Bronson Bodies as the sea swept over the city; but for the most part the people who had remained were silent—paired off, here and there, sharing in each other's arms the terrible excitement of dawning doomsday.

TONY twisted on his bed and remembered his mother. When this tide turned—and enormous as it was, it must flow six hours, ebb for six before it flowed again, just like the moon tides—he must set off home for his last service to her.

"Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days, that I may be certified how long I have to live." The lines for the burial of the dead began echoing in his brain. *"Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long; and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee; and verily every man living is altogether vanity."*

Tony had shut his eyes, and now he opened them to the light of the Bronson Bodies slanting into the room. . . . *"For when thou art angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told."*

The woman had ceased to shriek; but the negro's bass boomed on. Tony was

sure it was a black man singing the weird chant which rode on the waters. The piper, too, played on. . . .

Tony was aware that some one was shaking him.

"Morning?" he complained.

"Not morning," Kyto's voice admitted. "But the tide now—"

"Oh, yes," said Tony, sitting up as he remembered. "Thank you, Kyto."

"Coffee," said Kyto modestly, "will be much as usual, I venture to hope."

Tony arose and stalked to the window to look down at water, now rushing seaward. The roll of the world, while he had slept, had turned the city and the coast away from the Bronson Bodies so that now they sucked the sea outward; and the wash made whirlpools at the cross-streets.

It was the gray light of dawn which showed him the whirlpools. In the west, the awful Bronson Bodies had set; but Tony knew that, though now for twelve hours they would be invisible, the force of their baleful violence, even upon the side of the world which had spun away from them, was in no sense diminished. The tide which had risen under them would flow out for six hours, to be sure; but then—though they were on the opposite side of the world—they would raise the frightful flow again just six hours later. . . .

"Coffee," reminded Kyto patiently, "you will need."

"Yes," admitted Tony, turning, "I'll need coffee."

"Miss Eve insists to pour it."

"Oh, she's up?"

"Very ready to see you."

An airplane hummed over head; at some small distance, several others. Ransdell undoubtedly was in one of them. Inspection from the air of effects upon the earth, was one of his duties—a sort of reconnaissance of the lines of destruction. Tony thought of Ransdell looking down and wondering about Eve. The flyer's admiration of her amounted to openly desirous adoration. There was the poet Eliot James, too.

They were bound with him—and with Eve—in the close company of the League of the Last Days whose function lay no longer in the vague future. The peculiar rules and regulations of the League already were operative in part; others would clamp their control upon him immediately.

Tony today resented it. He made no attempt to shake off his overpossessive

jealousy of Ransdell or Eliot James over Eve. She would go home with him today—to his home, where his mother had been murdered. Eve and he would leave his home together—for what next destination? To return her to her father, who forbade Tony attempting to exercise any exclusive claim upon her? No; Tony would not return her to her father.

HEENDRON had arisen; and as if through the wall he had read Tony's defiance, he opened the door and entered.

He offered his hand. "I have heard, Tony, the news which reached you after I retired. I am sorry."

"You're not," returned Tony. It was no morning for perfunctory politeness.

"You're right," acceded Hendron. "I'm not. I know it is altogether better that your mother died now. I am sorry only for the shock to you which you cannot argue away. Eve tells me that she goes home with you. I am glad of that. . . . Last night, Tony, the Bronson Bodies were studied in every observatory on the side of the world turned to them. Of course they were closer than ever before, and conditions were highly favorable for observation. I would have liked to be at a telescope; but that is the prerogative of others. My duty was here. However, a few reports have reached me. Tony, cities have been seen."

"Cities?" said Tony.

"On Bronson Alpha. Bronson Beta continues to turn like a great gaseous globe; but Bronson Alpha, which already had displayed air and land and water, last night exhibited—cities. . . . We can see the geography of Bronson Alpha quite plainly. It rotates probably at the same rate it turned, making day and night, when it was spinning about its sun. It makes a rotation in slightly over thirty hours, you may remember; and it happens to rotate at such an angle relative to us that we have studied its entire surface. Something more than two thirds of the surface is sea; the land lies chiefly in four continents with two well-marked archipelagoes. We have seen not merely the seas and the lines of the shores, but the mountain ranges and the river valleys.

"At points upon the seacoasts and at points in the river valleys where intelligent beings—if they once lived on that globe—would have built cities, there are areas plainly marked which have distinct characteristics of their own. There is no doubt in the minds of the men who



"Bronson Beta collided with the moon in a glancing blow; but it broke the moon into fragments."

have studied them; there is no important disagreement. The telescopes of the world were trained last night, Tony, upon the sites of cities on that world. Tony, for millions of years there was life on Bronson Alpha as there has been life here. For more than a thousand million years, we believe, the slow, cautious but cruel process of evolution has been going on there as it has here.

"Recall the calendar of geological time, Tony. Azoic time—perhaps a billion years while the earth was spinning round our sun with no life upon it at all—azoic time, showing no vestige of organic life. Then archeozoic time—the earliest, most minute forms of life—five hundred million years. Then proterozoic time—five hundred million more—the age of primitive marine life; then paleozoic time, three hundred million years more while life developed in the sea; then mesozoic time—more than a hundred million years when reptiles ruled the earth.

"A hundred million years merely for the Age of Reptiles, Tony, when in the seas, on the lands and in the very air itself, the world was dominated by a diverse and monstrous horde of reptiles!

"They passed; and we came to the age of mammals—and of man.

"Something of the sort must have transpired on Bronson Alpha while it was spinning about its sun. That is the significance of the cities that we have seen. For cities, of course, can not 'occur.' They must have thousands and tens of thousands of years of human strife and development behind them; and behind that, the millions of years of the mammals, the reptiles, the life in the seas.

"It is a developed world—a fully developed world which approached us, Tony, with its cities that we now can see."

"Not inhabited cities," objected Tony.

"Of course not inhabited now; but once. There can be no possible doubt that everyone on that world is dead. The point is, they lived; so very likely we also can live on their world—if we merely reach it."

"Merely," repeated Tony mockingly.

"Yes," said Hendron, ignoring his tone. "It is most likely that where they lived, we can. And think of stepping upon that soil up there, finding a road leading to one of their cities—and entering it!"

He recollected himself suddenly and extended his hand. "You have an errand, Tony, to complete between the tides. I gladly lend you Eve to accompany you. She will tell you later what we all have to do."

He led Tony to Eve's door but did not linger, thereafter. Tony went in alone.

She was at a tiny table where a blue flame burned below a coffee percolator, and where an oil lamp, following the failure of electricity, augmented the faint gray of approaching dawn.

Was it the light, he wondered, or was Eve this morning really so pale?

He came to her, and whatever the rules for this day, he claimed her with his arms and kissed her.

"Now," he said with some satisfaction, "you're not so pale."

She did not disengage herself at once; and before she did, she clung tightly to him for a moment. Then she said:

"You've got to have your coffee now, Tony."

"I suppose so.... But there's no stimulant in the world like you, Eve."

"I'll be with you all day."

"Then let's not think of anything beyond."

She turned the tiny tap of the silver coffeepot, filled a cup for him, one for herself. A few minutes later they went down together.

The rushing ebb of the tremendous tide was swirling less than a foot deep over the pavement, and was falling so rapidly that the curb emerged even while they were watching. From upper floors, where many automobiles had been stored against the tide, cars were reaching the street. One drove in the splash before Tony and Eve and stopped. The driver turned it over to them; and Tony took the wheel with Eve beside him.

They drove with all possible speed, no longer encountering the tide itself, but lurching through vast puddles left by the retreating water. Débris from offices, shops and tenements swept by the tides bestrewed the street.

A few people appeared; a couple of motorcycle police, not in the least concerned with cars, were making some last inspection of the city.

Bodies lay in the street; and now on the right a haze of smoke drifting from an area that had burned down during the night.

THE morning, though the sun had not yet risen, felt sticky. The passage of water over Manhattan had laden the air with moisture so that driving between the forsaken skyscrapers was like journeying a strange, gaunt jungle.

Tony noticed many things mechanically, with Eve at his side, through the re-echoing streets; the rows of smashed windows along Fifth Avenue—tipped-over dummies, wrecked displays. Piles of useless goods on the sidewalks, the result of looting; the Empire State Building standing proudly against the blue sky, ignorant of its destiny, still lord of man's creation.

The East River when they reached it, was a torrent low in its channel being sucked dry toward the sea. Wreckage strewed the strangely exposed bottom. The bridge; a few miles more of flood débris in steaming streets. Then towns and villages which also had been overswept.

Now the country with its higher hills whereon Tony and Eve marked in the first sunlight, the line left by the water at its height. They dipped through empty villages and rose to hamlets whose inhabitants still lingered, staring in a dulled wonderment at the speeding car. The effect of the vast desolation beat into the soul; derelict, helpless people, occasional burning houses, a loose horse or a wandering sheep—emptiness, silence.

They dipped into a hollow which was

a pool not drained but which could be traversed; they climbed a slope with a sharp turn which was blocked; and there two men sprang at them.

Tony jerked out his pistol; but today—and though he was on his way to his mother who was murdered—he could not pull the trigger on these men. He beat down one with the butt, instead, and with the barrel cowed the other.

He got the car clear and with Eve drove on, realizing they would have killed him and taken Eve with them. Why had he left them alive?

Ah—here was the road home! Home! His home, where he had been born and where he was a little boy. Home, the home that had been his father's and his grandfather's and before that for four generations. Down this road from his home, some man named Drake had gone to fight in the Great War, the War of the Rebellion, in 1812 and to join the army in Washington.

Tony recalled how his earliest remembrances were of strangers coming to peer about the house which they called "historic," and how they raved about the things they called "old." The house was high on a hillside, and as he drove along the winding road, he rode over the mark where the water had risen the night before, and thought what a mere moment in geologic time the things "old" and "historic" here represented.

He tried not to think about his mother yet.

Eve, beside him, placed her hand over his which held the steering-wheel.

"You'll let me stay close beside you, Tony," she appealed.

"Yes. We're almost there."

Familiar landmarks bobbed up on both sides, everywhere: a log cabin he had built as a boy; here was the way to the old well—the "revolutionary well."

A thousand million years, at least, life had been developing upon this earth; a thousand million years like them had been required for the process which must have preceded the first molding of the bricks which built the cities on Bronson Alpha—which, some countless æons ago, had come to an end. For a thousand million years, since their inhabitants died, they might have been drifting in the dark until today, at last, they found our sun, and the telescopes of the world were turned upon them.

It was useful to think of something like this when driving to your home where your mother lay. . . .

There was the tree where he had fashioned his tree dwelling; the platform still stood in the boughs. It was hidden from the house, but within hailing distance. Playing there, he could hear his mother's voice calling; sometimes he'd pretended that he did not hear.

How long ago was that? How old was he? Oh, that was fifteen years ago. Fifteen, in a thousand million years.

Time was beginning to tick on a different scale in Tony's brain. Not the worldly clock but the awful chronometer of the cosmos was beginning to space, for him, in enormous seconds. And Tony realized that Hendron, speaking to him as he had done, had not been heartless; he had attempted to extend to him a merciful morphia from his own mind. What happened here this morning could not matter, in the stupendous perspective of time. . . .

"Here we are."

The house was before them, white, calm, confident. A stout, secure dwelling with its own traditions. Tony's heart leaped. How he loved it—and her who had been its spirit! How often she had stood in that doorway awaiting him!

SOME one was standing there now—an old woman, slight, white-haired. Tony recognized her—Mrs. Haskins, the minister's wife. She advanced toward Tony, and old Hezekiah Haskins took her place in the doorway.

"What happened?"

Not what happened to the world last night; not what happened to millions and hundreds of millions overswept or sent fleeing by the sea. But what happened here?

Old Haskins told Tony, as kindly as he could:

"She was alone; she did not feel afraid, though all the village and even her servants had fled. The band of men came by. She did not try to keep them out. Knowing her,—and judging by what I found,—she asked them in and offered them food. Some of them had been drinking; or they were mad with the intoxication of destruction. Some one shot her cleanly—once, Tony. It might have been one more thoughtful than the rest, more merciful. It is certain, Tony, she did not suffer."

Tony could not speak. Eve clung to his hand. "Thank God for that, Tony!" she whispered.

Briefly Tony unclasped his hand from Eve's and met the old minister's quiver-

ing grasp. He bent and kissed Mrs. Haskins' gray cheek.

"Thank you. Thank you both," he whispered. "You shouldn't have stayed here; you shouldn't have waited for me. But you did."

"Orson also remained," Hezekiah Haskins said. Old Orson was the sexton. "He's inside. He's—made what arrangements he could."

"I'll go in now," Tony said to Eve. "I'll go in alone for a few minutes. Will you come in, then, to—us?"

"LORD, thou hast been our refuge in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made: thou art God from everlasting, and world without end."

Old Hezekiah Haskins and his wife, and Orson the sexton, and Tony Drake and Eve Hendron stood on the hilltop where the men of the Drake blood and the women who reproduced them in all generations of memory lay buried. A closed box lay waiting its lowering into the ground.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord; and with thine ears consider my calling.... For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were."

"Oh, spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and be no more seen."

Old Hezekiah Haskins held the book before him, but he did not read. A thousand times in his fifty years of the ministry he had repeated the words of that

The earth burst open like a ripe grape;
Africa split in two and out of the grisly
incision poured a tumult of the hell that
dwells within the earth.

pungent, pathetic appeal voiced for all the dying by the great poet of the psalms: *"For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were."*

Tony's eyes turned to the graves of his fathers; their headstones stood in a line, with their birth-dates and their ages.

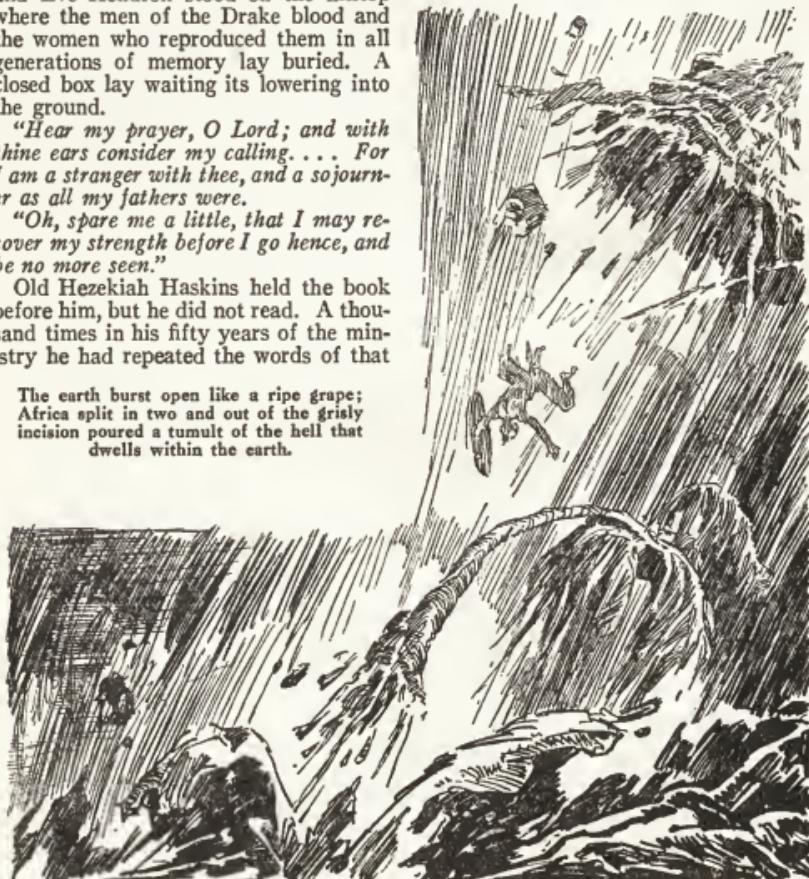
"The days of our age three score and ten."

What were three score and ten in a thousand million years? Today, in a few hours, the tide would wash this hilltop.

Connecticut had become an archipelago; the highest hills were islands. Their slopes were shoals over which the tide swirled white. The sun stood in the sky blazing down upon this strange sea.

"Thou turnest man to destruction; again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men."

Men and children of men on Bronson Alpha too. Men millions and thousands





FRANKLIN

years of birth and death and birth again before even the first brick could be laid in the oldest city on Bronson Alpha, which men on earth had seen last night with their telescopes.

"For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday; seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

"For when thou art angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end like a tale that is told."

The sexton and old Hezekiah alone could not lift the box to lower it. Tony had to help them with it. He did; and his mother lay beside her husband.

Tonight, when the huge Bronson Beta and Bronson Alpha with its visible cities of its own dead were on this side of the world again, the tide might rise over this hill. What matter? His mother lay where she would have chosen. A short time now, and all this world would end.

of millions of years in the making. Azotic time—proterozoic time—hundreds of millions of years, while life slowly developed in the seas. Hundreds of millions more, while it emerged from the seas; a hundred million more, while reptiles ruled the land, the sky and water. Then they were swept away; mammals came; and man—a thousand millions

"I'll take you away," Tony was saying to the old minister and his wife and the older sexton. "We're flying west tonight to the central plateau. We'll manage somehow to take you with us."

"Not me," said the old sexton. "Do not take me from the will of the Lord!"

Nor would the minister and his wife be moved. They would journey today, when the water receded, into the higher hills; but that was all they would do.

CHAPTER XII

THE airplane settled to earth on the high ground between Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, just as the Bronson Bodies, appallingly large, rose over the eastern horizon. Nearly a thousand people came from the great cantonment to greet Tony and Hendron's daughter. The scientist had given up his New Mexico venture entirely, and brought his congregation of human beings all to his Michigan retreat.

Greetings, however, were not fully made until the Bronson Bodies had been observed. Alpha now exceeded the moon, and it shone with a pearly luster and a brilliance which the moon had never possessed. Around it was an aureole of soft radiance where its atmosphere, thawed by the warmth of the sun it so rapidly approached, had completely resummed its gaseous state.

But Bronson Alpha did not compare with the spectacle of Beta. Beta was gigantic—bigger than the sun, and seemingly almost as bright, for the clouds which streamed up from every part of its surface threw back the sun's light, dazzling, white and hard. There was no night. Neither Eve nor Tony had seen Hendron's camp in Michigan; and when wonderment over the ascending bodies gave way to uneasy familiarity, Eliot James took them on a tour of inspection.

Hendron had prepared admirably for the days which he had known would lie ahead of his hand-picked community. There were two prodigious dining-halls, two buildings not unlike apartment houses in which the men and women were domiciled. In addition there was a building resembling a hangar set on end, which towered above the surrounding forests more than a hundred feet. At its side was the landing-field, space for the sheltering of the planes, and opposite the landing-field, a long row of shops which terminated in an iron works.

It was to the machine-shops and foundry that Eliot James last took his companions.

"The crew here," he said to Eve, "has already finished part of the construction on the Ark which your father is planning. If we wanted to, we could build a battleship here; in the laboratories anything that has been done could be repeated; and a great many things have been accomplished that have never been done before. By tomorrow night I presume that the entire New York equipment will have been reinstalled here."

Tony whistled. "It's amazing. Genius, sheer genius! How about food?"

Eliot James smiled. "There is enough food for the entire congregation as long as we will need it."

"Now show us the 'Ark.'"

Eve's father came out from the hangar to act as their guide.

From the hysterical white glare of the Bronson Bodies they were taken into a mighty chamber which rose seemingly to the sky itself, where the brilliance was even greater. A hundred things inside that chamber might have attracted their attention—its flood-lighting system, or the tremendous bracing of its metal walls; but their eyes were only for the object in its center. The Ark on that late July evening—the focal-point, the dream and hope of all those whom Hendron had gathered together—stood upright on a gigantic concrete block in a cradle of steel beams. Its length was one hundred and thirty-five feet. It was sixty-two feet in diameter, and its shape was cylindrical. Stream-lining was unnecessary for travel in the outer reaches of space, where there was no air to set up resistance. The metal which composed it was a special alloy eighteen inches in thickness, electro-plated on the outside with an alloy which shone like chromium.

After Tony had looked at it for a long time, he said: "It is by far the most spectacular object which mankind has ever achieved."

Hendron glanced at him and continued his exposition. "A second shell, much smaller, goes inside; and between the inner shell and its outer guard are several layers of insulation material. Inside the shell will be engines which generate the current, which in turn releases the blast of atomic energy, store-chambers for everything to be carried, the mechanisms of control, the aeration plant, the heating units and the quarters for passengers."

Tony tore his eyes from the sight. "How many will she carry?" he asked quietly.

Hendron hesitated; then he said: "For a trip of the duration I contemplate, she would be able to take about one hundred people."

Tony's voice was still quieter. "Then you have nine hundred idealists in your camp here."

The older man smiled. "Unless I am greatly mistaken, I have a thousand."

"They all know about the ship?"

"Something about it. Nearly half of them have been working on it, or on apparatus connected with it."

"You pay no wages?"

"I've offered wages. In most cases they've been refused. I have more than three million dollars in gold available here for 'expenses encountered in dealing with people who still wish money for their time or materials.'"

"I see. How long a trip do you contemplate?"

Hendron took the young man's breath. "Ninety hours. That is, provided,"—and his voice began to shake,—"provided we can find proper materials with which to line our blast-tubes. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to propel this thing for more than a few minutes. I—"

Eve looked at her father. "Dad, you've got to get to bed. You'd better take some veronal or something, and don't worry so. We'll find the alloy all right. We've done everything else, and the things we've done were even more difficult."

Hendron nodded; and Tony, looking at him, realized for the first time how much the scientist had aged recently. They went through the door of the hangar in single file, and high up among the beams and buttresses that supported it, a shower of sparks fell from an acetylene welding-torch.

OUTSIDE, the wind was blowing. It sighed hotly in the near-by trees—wind that presaged a storm. The lights in the foundry and laboratories, the power-house and the dormitories made a ring around them, a ring of yellow fireflies faint beneath the glare of the Bronson Bodies. Tony looked up at them, and it seemed to him that he could almost feel and hear them in their awful rush through space: Alpha, a dazzling white world and Beta, an insensible luminous disk of destruction. Both bodies seemed to stand away from the vault of the heavens.

Hendron left them. Soon afterward James withdrew with the apology that he wished to write to bring up to date his diary. Tony escorted Eve to the women's dormitory. A phonograph was playing in the general room on the ground floor. One of the girls was singing, and another was sitting at a table writing what was apparently a letter. They could all be seen through the open windows, and Tony wondered what postman that girl expected would carry her missive. Eve bade him good night, then went inside.

Tony, left alone, walked over the gleaming ground to the top of a neighboring hill. Hendron's village looked on the northern side like a university campus, and on the southern side like the heart of a manufacturing district. All around it stretched the Michigan wilderness. The ground had been chosen partly because of the age and firmness of its geological base, and partly because of its isolation.

He sat down on a large stone. The hot night wind blew with increasing violence, and the double shadows, one sharp and one faint, which were cast by all things in the light of the Bronson Bodies, were abruptly obliterated by the passage of a dark cloud.

Tony's mind ran unevenly and irresolutely. "Probably," he thought, "this little community is the most self-sufficient of any place on earth. All these people, these brilliant temperamental men and women, have subsided and made themselves like soldiers in Hendron's service—an amazing man. . . . Only a hundred people . . . I wonder how many of those I brought to New York they'll take."

Fears assailed him: "Suppose they don't complete the Ark successfully, and she never leaves the ground? Then all these people would have given their lives for nothing. . . . Suppose it leaves the earth and fails—falls back for hundreds of miles, gaining speed all the way, so that when it hit the atmosphere it would turn red-hot and burn itself up just like a meteor? What hideous chances have to be taken! If only I were a scientist and could help them! If only I could sit up day and night with the others, trying to find the metal that would make the ship fly." . . .

A larger cloud obscured the Bronson Bodies. The wind came in violent gusts. The great globes in the sky which disturbed sea and land, also enormously distorted the atmospheric envelope.

The steady sound of machinery reached Tony's ears, and the ring of iron against iron. The wind wailed upon the aeolian harp of the trees. Tony thought of the tides that would rise that night and on following nights; and faintly, like the palpitation of a steamer's deck, the earth shook beneath his feet as if in answer to his meditation. And Tony realized that the heart of the earth was straining toward its celestial companions.

CHAPTER XIII

ON the night of the twenty-fifth, tides unprecedented in the world's history swept every seacoast. There were earthquakes of varying magnitude all over the world. In the day that followed, volcanoes opened up, and islands sank beneath the sea; and on the night of the twenty-sixth the greater Bronson Body came within its minimum distance from the earth on this their first approach.

No complete record was ever made of the devastation.

Eliot James, who made some tabulation of it in the succeeding months, could never believe all that he saw and heard, but it must have been true.

The eastern coast of the United States sustained a tidal wave seven hundred and fifty feet in height, which came in from the sea in relentless terraces and inundated the land to the very foot of the Appalachians. Its westward rush destroyed every building, every hovel, every skyscraper, every city, from Bangor in Maine to Key West in Florida. The tide looped into the Gulf of Mexico, rolled up the Mississippi Valley, becoming in some places so congested with material along its foaming face that the terrified human beings upon whom it descended saw a wall of trees and houses, of stones and machinery, of all the conglomerate handiwork of men and Nature—rather than the remorseless or uplifted water behind it. When the tide gushed back to the ocean's bed, it strewed the gullied landscape with the things it had uprooted.

It roared around South America, turning the Amazon Basin into a vast inland sea which stretched from what had been the east coast to the Andes Mountains on the west coast. The speed of this tide was beyond calculation the speed of the earth's rotation itself.

Every river became a channel for it.

It spilled over Asia. It inundated the great plain of China. It descended from the arctic regions and removed much of France, England and Germany, all of Holland and the great Soviet Empire, from the list of nations. Arctic water hundreds of feet deep flowed into the Caspian Sea and hurled the last of its august inertia upon the Caucasus.

Western Asia and Arabia, southern India, Africa and much of Australia remained dry land. Those who saw that tide from mountain-tops were never afterward able to depict it for their fellows. The mind of man is not adjusted for a close observation of phenomena that belong to the cosmos. To see that dark obsidian sky-clutching torrent of water moving inward upon the land at a velocity of many hundreds of miles an hour was to behold something foreign to the realm of Nature, as Nature even at its most furious has hitherto appeared to man.

More than half the population of the world died in the tides that rose and subsided during the proximity of the Bronson Bodies. But those who by design or through accident found themselves on land that remained dry were not necessarily spared.

The earthquake which Tony had felt in Michigan was the first of a series of shocks which increased steadily in violence for the next forty-eight hours, and which never afterward wholly ceased. Hendron had chosen his spot well, for it was one of the relatively few portions of the undeluged world which was not reduced to an untenable wasteland of smoking rock and creeping lava.

NOTHING in the category of earthquake or eruption occurring within the memory of the race could even furnish criteria for the manifestations everywhere on the earth's crust on that July twenty-sixth. Man has witnessed the explosion of whole mountains. He has seen the disappearance and the formation of islands. Yards of sea-coast have subsided before his very eyes. Fissures wide enough to contain an army have opened at his feet; but such occurrences were not even minutiae in the hours of the closest approach of the Bronson Bodies.

As hour by hour the earth presented new surfaces to the awful gravitational pull of those spheres, a series of stupendous cataclysms took place. Underneath the brittle slag which man considers both

solid and enduring lie thousands of miles of dense compressed molten material. The earth's crust does not hold back that material. It is kept in place only by a delicate adjustment of gravity; and the interference of the Bronson Bodies distorted that balance. The earth burst open like a ripe grape! From a geological standpoint the tides which swept over were a phenomenon of but trifling magnitude.

THE center of the continent of Africa split in two as if a mighty cleaver had come down on it, and out of the grisly incision poured an unquenchable tumult of the hell that dwells within the earth. Chasms yawned in the ocean floor, swallowing levels of the sea and returning it instantaneously in continents of steam. The great plateau of inner Thibet dropped like an express elevator nine hundred feet. South America was riven into two islands, one extending north and south in the shape of a sickle, and the other, roughly circular, composed of all that remained of the high lands of Brazil. North America reeled and shuddered, split, snapped, boomed and leaped. The Rocky Mountains lost their immobility and danced like waves of water. From the place that had been Yellowstone Park a mantle of lava was spread over thousands of square miles. The coastal plain along the Pacific disappeared, and the water moved up to dash itself in fury against a range of active volcanoes that extended from Nome to Panama.

Gases, steam and ashes welled from ten thousand vents into the earth's atmosphere. The sun went out, the stars were made invisible. Blistering heat blew to the ends of the earth. The polar ice melted and a new raw land emerged, fiery and shattered, mobile and diastrophic.

Those human beings who survived the world's white-hot throes were survivors for the most part through good fortune. Few escaped through design—on the entire planet only a dozen places which had been picked by the geologists as refuges remained habitable.

Upon millions poured oceans of seething magma carrying death more terrible than the death which rolled on the tongue of the great tides. The air which was breathed by other millions was suddenly choked with sulphurous fumes and they fell like gassed soldiers, strangling in the streets of their destroyed cities. Live

steam, blown with the violence of a hurricane, scalded populous centers and barren steppes impartially. From a sky that had hitherto deluged mankind only with rain, snow and hail, fell now burning torrents and red-hot sleet. The very earth itself slowed in its rotation, sped up again, sucked and dragged through space at the caprice of the bodies in the sky above. It became girdled in smoke and steam, and blasts of hot gas; and upon it as Bronson Alpha and Beta drew away, there fell torrential rains which hewed down rich land to the bare rock, which cooled the issue from the earth to vast metallic oceans, and which were accompanied by lightnings that furnished the infernal scenery with incessant illumination, and by thunder which blended undetectably with the terrestrial din.

At Hendron's camp forty-eight hours in the Pit were experienced; and yet Hendron's camp was on one of the safest and least disturbed corners of the world.

The first black clouds which Tony had observed marked the beginning of an electrical storm. The tremor he felt presaged a steady crescendo of earth-shakings. He left his hill-top soon and found that the population of the colony which, an hour before, had retired for the night, was again awake. He met Hendron and several scientists making a last tour of inspection; and he joined them.

"The dormitories," Hendron said, "are presumably quake-proof. I don't think any force could knock over the buttresses we have put around the projectile."

EVEN as he spoke, the wind increased, lightning stabbed the sky, the radiance of the Bronson Bodies was permanently extinguished, and the gusty wind was transformed to a steady tempest. Lights were on in every building; and as shock followed shock, people began to pour into the outdoors.

Tony tried to locate Eve, but was unable to do so in the gathering throng. The darkness outside the range of lights was absolute. The temperature of the wind dropped many degrees, so that it seemed cold in comparison to the heat of early evening. It was difficult to walk on the wide cleared area between the various buildings, for the ground underfoot frequently forced itself up like the floor of a rapidly decelerated elevator. The lightning came nearer. The thunder was continual. It was hard to hear the voice of one's nearest neighbor. Word passed from person to person in

staccato shouts that all buildings were to be evacuated. Tony himself, with half a dozen others, rushed into the brightly illuminated women's dormitory and hurriedly brought from it into the tumult and rain those who had remained there.

By ten o'clock the violence of the quakes was great enough so that it was difficult to stand. The people huddled like sheep in a storm in the lee of the buildings. Lightning hammered incessantly on the tall steel tower which surrounded the space-flyer. Tony moved through the assembled people shouting words of encouragement he did not feel.

Shortly after eleven an extraordinarily violent shock lifted one end of the men's building so that bricks and cement cascaded from its wall. Immediately Tony located Hendron, who was sitting wrapped in a tarpaulin on a stone in the center of the crowd, and made a suggestion which was forthwith carried out. The flood-lights were thrown on the landing-field, and everyone migrated thither. They congregated again in the center of smooth open space, a weird collection in their hastily assumed wraps, with their white faces looking upward picked out through the rain by the flood-lights and the blue flashes from the heavens.

BEFORE midnight some caprice of the seismic disturbance snapped off the power. At one o'clock in the morning a truck from the kitchens of the dining-halls floundered through the mud with sandwiches and coffee. At two o'clock the temperature of the wind dropped again, and the wet multitude shivered and chattered with cold. Hail fell in place of rain.

Half an hour later the wind stopped abruptly, and in that sudden silence, between bursts of thunder, human voices rose in a loud clamor of a hundred individual conversations. The wind puffed, veered, and came back from the southwest. It blew fifty miles an hour, a hundred, and then rose from that velocity to an immeasurable degree. Leaves and whole branches shot through the air. Every man and woman was compelled to lie face down on the muddy earth, the undulations of which increased.

They lay for an hour or more, shivering, gasping for breath, hiding their faces. Then a particularly violent shock suddenly separated the landing-field into two parts, one of which rose eight or nine feet above the other, leaving a sharp

diminutive precipice across the middle of the field. A dozen people had been actually straddling the point of fracture; and some fell on the lower side, while others, crawling away from the new and terrifying menace, were lifted up. Fortunately no crevice opened, although the split edges of the underlying rocks ground against each other with a noise that transcended the tumult. Toward morning the temperature of the wind began to rise.

There was no dawn, no daylight, only a diffused inadequate grayness through which the tumbling streaming clouds could be dimly apprehended. The people lay on the ground, each man wrapped in the terrors of his own soul, with fingers clutching the grass or buried in the earth. And so the day began. The air grew perpetually more warm. An augmented fury of the gale brought a faint odor of sulphur.

Midday held no respite. It was impossible to bring up food against the gale, impossible even to stand. The sulphurous odors and the heat increased. The driven rain seemed hot. Toward what would have been afternoon, and in the absolute darkness, there was a sudden abatement; and the wind, while it still blew strong, allowed the shaken populace to rise and to stare through the impenetrable murk. Fifty or more of the men made a rush for the dining-halls. They found them, and were surprised that they had not collapsed. The low hills around had furnished them with protection. There was no time to prepare food. Snatching what they could, and loading themselves with containers of drinking-water, they fought their way back to the field. There, like animals, the people drank and ate, finishing in time only to throw themselves once again on the bare ground under the renewed fury of the storm.

Night came again. The sulphur in the air, the fumes and gasses, the heat and smoke and dust, the hot rain, almost extinguished their frantically defended lives. They lay now in the lee of the fault, but even there the down-swirl of the tempest and lash of the elements was almost unendurable. The dust and rain combined with the wind to make a diagonal downfall of foetid mud which blistered them and covered the earth. Through that second night no one was able to talk, to think, to move, to do more than lie prone amid the chaos, gasping for breath.



The air was suddenly choked by sulphurous fumes; millions fell like gassed soldiers.

CHAPTER XIV

THE respite brought by morning was comparative rather than real. The wind abated; the torrential rain became intermittent; and the visibility returned, though no one could have told whether it was early morning or twilight.

Tony rose to his feet the instant the wind slackened. Through all the long and terrible hours he had been absent from Eve. It would have been utterly unthinkable to attempt to locate her in the midst of that sound and fury. He found, however, that there was no use in looking for her immediately. So heavy had been the downpour of rain and ashes from the sky, that it not only reduced the field to a quagmire, but it covered the human beings who had lain there with a thick chocolate-colored coating, so that as one by one the people arose to sitting and standing postures, he found it dif-

ficult even to distinguish man from woman.

He was compelled to put Eve from his mind. It was necessary to think of all and not one. Succor was needed sorely. Many of those who had been in the field were unable to rise. Several had been injured. Of the older men a number were undoubtedly suffering perhaps fatally from exposure.

Tony found that his limbs would scarcely support him when he did regain them; but after he had staggered for some distance through the murk, his numbed circulation was restored, and his muscles responded. He held brief conversation with those who were standing:

"Are you all right?" If the answer was in the negative, he replied: "Sit down. We'll take care of you." But when it was in the affirmative, he said: "Come with me. We'll start things going again. I think the worst is over."

OUT of the subsiding maelstrom he collected some thirty or forty persons, most of them men. They walked off the field together; and as they walked, slowly and painfully, their feet sucking in the quagmire and stumbling on débris, Tony proceeded with his organization.

"Any of you men working on the power plant?" he shouted. . . . "Right. You two come over here. Now who else here was in the machine-shop? . . . Good. You fellows get to work on starting up the lights. They'll be the first thing. Now I want half of you to get beds in shape in the women's hall." He counted the number he required, slapping them on the shoulders and dispatching them toward the halls, which loomed in the distance. "If they don't look safe," he shouted after the disappearing men, "find a place that is safe, and put the beds there. We'll have to have a hospital."

With the remnant of his men he went to the dining-halls. One of these buildings was a complete wreck, but the other still stood. They entered the kitchen. Its floor was knee-deep in mud. He recognized among those still with him Taylor, the student of light, whom he had sent to Hendron from Harvard. "Take charge in here, will you, Taylor? I'll leave you half these men. The rest of us are going out to round up the doctors and get medical supplies ready. They'll want coffee out there, and any kind of food that they can eat immediately." He saw Taylor's mouth smile in assent, and heard Taylor begin to issue instructions

for the lighting of a fire in one of the big stoves.

Once again he went outdoors. It was a little lighter. His anxious gaze traveled to the tower that housed the Ark, and from its silhouette he deduced that it was at least superficially intact. The shouting he had done had already rendered him hoarse, for the air was still sulphurous. It irritated the nose and throat, and produced in everyone a dry frequent cough. Tony was apprehensive for fear the gasses in the air might increase in volume and suffocate them, but he banished the thought from his mind: it was but one of innumerable apprehensions, many of them greater, which numbed his consciousness and the consciousness of all his fellows during that terrifying forty-eight hours. Besides the irritating vapors in the air, there was heat, not the heat expected any day in July, but such heat as surrounds a blast furnace—a sullen withering heat which blanched the skin, parched the lips and was unrelieved by the rivulets of perspiration that covered the body.

Tony went back alone to the flying-field. It was a little lighter. Mist motions were visible in the sky, and threads of vapor were flung over the Stygian landscape by the wind. People were returning from what had been the flying-field to the partial wreck of the camp in twos and threes, many of them limping, some of them being carried. They made a stream of humanity like walking wounded—a procession of hunger, thirst, pain and exhaustion struggling across a landscape that would have credited Dante's Inferno itself, struggling through a nether gloom, slobbered with mire, breathing the hot metallic atmosphere. He found Eve at last, just as he reached the edge of the flying-field. She was helping two other girls, who were trying to carry a third. She recognized him and called to him.

"Are you all right, Eve?" His soul was in his rasping voice. He came close to her. He looked into her eyes. She nodded, first to him and then toward the unconscious girl. She put her lips close to his ear, for she could speak only in a whisper: "Give us a hand, Tony. This girl needs water. She fainted."

HE picked up the girl, and they followed him through the slough to the main hall of the women's dormitory. Beds were being carried there, and many of the beds were already filled. Some

one had found candles and stuck them in window-sills so that the room was lighted. Already two men who were doctors were examining the arrivals. Tony recognized one of the men as Dodson when he heard the boom of his voice: "Get hot water here, lots of it, boiling water. Don't anybody touch those bandages. Everything has to be sterilized. See if you can find anybody who knows anything about nursing. Get the rest of the doctors."

Somewhat Dodson had already managed to wash, and his heavy-jowled face radiated power and confidence. In the candle-light Tony recognized other muddy faces on the beds. A German actress seemed to have a broken leg, and a dignified gray-haired Austrian pathologist was himself a victim of the barrage that had fallen from the heavens.

TONY went outdoors again. It seemed to him that the air had freshened somewhat, and that the temperature had dropped. A gong boomed in the kitchen, and he remembered his thirst and hunger. For almost forty-eight hours he had had little to eat and little to drink. He knew he could not deny the needs of his body any longer. He hastened in the direction of the gong. Around a caldron of coffee and a heap of sandwiches, which were replenished as fast as they disappeared, were grouped at least two hundred people. Tony stood in the line which passed the caldron, and was handed a cup of coffee and a sandwich. The coffee tasted muddy. The sandwich had a flavor not unlike the noxious odor in the air. Tony's craving was for water, but he realized that for the time being all liquids would have to be boiled to eliminate their pollution. With his first sip of coffee he realized that brandy had been added to it. He wet his burning throat and swallowed his sandwich in three mouthfuls, and joined the line again.

His senses reasserted themselves. He realized that the wind was dying, the oppressiveness was departing and the temperature had lowered perceptibly. He was able for the first time to hear the conversation of people around him, and even in his shocked and shocking state, he was moved by mingled feelings of compassion and amusement. The heavy hand of the gods had scarcely been lifted. Its return might be expected imminently, and yet the marvelous resilience of humankind already was asserting itself.

"... Ruined my dress, absolutely ruined!" he heard one woman say.

And some one else laughed. That sentence spread. "Her dress was ruined. Too bad!"

FROM the men there came a different sort of comment:

"When I say I never saw anything like it before in my life, I mean I've never seen anything like it before in my life. . . ."

The excited voice of one of the scientists: "Amazing, the way things survived. Almost nothing has been damaged in the machine-shops and the power-houses. Those places were built like bank vaults. Great genius for organization, that man Hendron."

Another man spoke: "I inspected the seismograph first. The needle had shot clear off the roll the night before last and put it out of business. Then I looked at the barometric record. Air-pressure changed around here inches in minutes. The barometer went out of business too. You could almost feel what was happening to the earth. I had sensations of being lifted and lowered, and of pressure coming and going on my ears.

"I wonder how many people survived. The volcanic manifestations must have been awful. They must still be going on—although I can't tell whether it's earthquake now, or just my legs shaking. And smell the sulphur in the air."

Tony saw Peter Vanderbilt sitting pacifically on a log, a cup of coffee in one hand, a sandwich in the other, and his bedraggled handkerchief spread over his knees for a napkin. The elegant Vanderbilt's mustache was clogged with mud. His hair was a cake of mud. His shoes were gobs of mud. One of his pant-legs had been torn off at the knee. His shirt-tails had escaped his belt and festooned his midriff in stained tatters, and yet as Tony approached him, he still maintained his attitude of cosmic indifference, of urbanity so complete that nothing could succeed in ruffling it spiritually.

Vanderbilt rose. "Tony, my friend," he exclaimed. "What a masquerade! What a disguise! I recognized you only by the gauge in which heaven made your shoulders. Sit down. Join me in a spot of lunch."

Tony sat on the log, which apparently the wind had moved into position especially for Mr. Vanderbilt. "I'll have a snack with you," he replied. "Then I must get back to work."

The quondam Beau Brummel of Fifth Avenue nodded understandingly. "Work, my dear fellow! I never saw so many people who were so avid for work, and yet there's something exalting about it. And the storm was certainly impressive. I admit that I was impressed. In fact, I proclaim that I was impressed. Yet its whole moral was futility."

"Futility?"

"Oh, don't think that for a minute I was being philosophical. I wasn't referring to the obvious futility of all man's efforts and achievements. They were quite apparent before this—this—a disturbance. I was thinking of myself entirely. I was thinking of the many years I had spent as a lad in learning geography, and how useless all that knowledge was to me now. I should imagine that the geography I learned at twelve was now completely out of date."

Tony nodded to the man on the log. "So I should imagine. You'll excuse me, but I'm needed."

Peter Vanderbilt smiled and put his cup beside Tony's on the ground. Then without a word he rose and followed the younger man. They found Hendron emerging from the great hangar. His condition was neither worse nor better than that of the others. He seized Tony's shoulder the minute his eyes lighted upon him. "Tony, son, have you seen Eve?"

"Yes."

"She's all right?"

"She's entirely all right. She's working over at the emergency hospital."

BEHIND Hendron stood a number of men. He turned to them. "You go ahead and inspect the machine-shop. I'll join you in a minute."

He then noticed that Tony had a companion. "Hello, Vanderbilt. Glad to see you're safe." And again he spoke to Tony. "What was the extent of the injury to personnel?"

Tony shook his head. "I don't know yet."

Vanderbilt spoke. "I just came from the field hospital before I had my coffee. I was making a private check-up. So far as is known, no one here was killed. There are three cases of collapse that may develop into pneumonia, several minor cases of shock, two broken legs, one broken arm, a sprained ankle; one of the men who made coffee during the storm got burned, and there are forty or fifty people with more or less minor

scratches and abrasions. In all less than seventy-five cases were reported so far."

Hendron's head bobbed again. He sighed with relief. "Good God, I'm thankful! It was more terrifying out there, apparently, than it was dangerous."

"It was not unlike taking a Turkish bath on a roller coaster in the dark," Vanderbilt replied.

HENDRON rubbed his hand across his face. "Did you men say something about coffee?"

"With brandy in it," Tony said.

Vanderbilt took Hendron's arm. "May I escort you? You're a bit rocky, I guess."

"Just a bit. Brandy, eh? Good." Before he walked away, he spoke to Tony. "Listen, son—" The use of that word rocked Tony's heart. "This was much more than I had anticipated, much worse. But by the mercy of Providence the major dangers have passed, and we seem to be bloody but unbowed. The ship is safe, although one side was dented against its cradle. That's about all. If I had foreseen anything like this, I could have been better prepared for it, although perhaps not. An open field was about the only habitable sort of place. I've got to get some rest now. I'm just a few minutes away from unconsciousness. I want you to take over things, if you think you can stand up for another twelve hours."

"I'm in the pink," Tony answered.

"Good. You're in charge, then. Have me waked in twelve hours."

Tony began the rounds again. In the hall of the women's dormitory, Dodson and Smith were hard at work. Their patients sat or lay in bed. There was a smell of anaesthetics and antiseptic in the air. Eve, together with a dozen other women, was acting as nurse. She had changed her clothes, and washed. She smiled at him across the room, and Dodson spoke to him. "Tell Hendron we're managing things beautifully in here now. I don't think there's anybody here that won't recover."

"He's asleep," Tony replied. "I'll tell him when he wakes."

He looked at Eve again before he went out, and saw her eyes flooded with tears. Immediately he realized his thoughtlessness in not telling her at once that her father was safe, but there was no reproof in her starry-eyed glance. She understood that the situation had passed the

point at which rational and normal thoughtfulness could be expected.

Tony went next to the machine-shop. A shift of men was at work clearing away the infiltrated dust on the engines and the mud that had poured over the floors. Another group of men lay in deep sleep wherever there was room enough to recline. One of the workers explained: "Nobody around here can work for long without a little sleep, so we've going in one-hour shifts. Sleep an hour, clean an hour. Is that all right, Mr. Drake?"

"That's fine," Tony said.

At the power-house a voice hailed him.

"You're just in time, Mr. Drake."

"What for?"

"Come in." Tony entered the power-house. The man conducted him to a walled panel and pointed to a switch. "Pull her down."

Tony pulled. At once all over the cantonment obscurity was annihilated by the radiance of countless electric lights. The electrician who had summoned Tony grinned. "We're using a little emergency engine, and only about a quarter of the lights of the lines are operating. That's all we've had time to put in order. It's jerry-made, but it's better than this damn' gloom."

Tony's hand came down firmly on the man's shoulder. "It's marvelous. You boys work in shifts now. All of you need sleep."

The electrician nodded. "We will. Some of the big shots are inside. Shall I tell them to come out to see you?"

An idea suddenly struck Tony. "Look here. Why shouldn't I go see them if I want to? Why is it you expect them to come out and see me?"

"You're the boss, aren't you?"

"What makes you think I'm the boss?"

The man looked at him quizzically. "Why, it said so in the instruction-book we got when we were all sent out here. Everybody got a copy. It said you were second in command in any emergency to Mr. Hendron; and this is an emergency, isn't it?"

TONY was staggered by this new information. "It said that in a book?"

"Right. In the book of rules that everybody that lives here got the day they came. I had one in my pocket, but I lost pocket, book and all, out there on the landing-field."

Tony conquered his surprise. It flashed through his mind that Hendron was training him to be in command of those who

stayed behind and launched the Space Ship. He was conscious of a naïve pride at this indication of the great scientist's confidence in him. "I won't bother the men here," he said. "Just so long as we get as many lights as possible in operation, as fast as possible."

He found a group of men standing speculatively in front of the men's hall. One of the side walls had been shattered, and bricks had cascaded from the front walls to the ground. Tony looked at the building critically, and then said: "I don't think anybody should occupy it."

"There are a good many men in there asleep right now. Probably they walked in the dark without noticing the condition of the building."

Tony addressed the crowd. "If two or three of you care to volunteer to go in with me, we'll get them all out. The men will sleep for the time being on the floor in the south dining-hall."

He went into the insecure building, and practically all of the men who had been regarding it from the outside accompanied him. They roused the sleepers.

The floor of the dining-hall was dry: men in dozens, and then in scores, without speech, among themselves, pushed aside the tables and stretched out on the bare boards, falling instantly to sleep.

NEXT Tony went to the kitchen. Fires were going in two stoves; more coffee was ready, the supply of sandwiches had overtaken the demand, and kettles of soup augmented it. Taylor was still in charge, and he made his report as soon as he saw Tony.

"The big storehouses are half underground, as you probably know, and I don't think the food in them has been hurt much, although it has been shaken up. I didn't know anything about the feeding arrangements, but I've located a bunch of the men who did. There's apparently a large herd of livestock and a lot of poultry about a quarter of a mile in the woods. I've sent men there to take charge. They already reported that the sheep and goats and steers didn't budge, although their pens and corrals were destroyed. They're putting up barbed-wire for the time being. Everything got shaken up pretty badly, and the water and mud spoiled whatever it got into, but most of the stuff was in big containers. The main that carried the water from the reservoir is all smashed to hell, and I guess the water in the reservoir isn't any good anyway. I'm boiling all that

I use, but somebody has just got the bright idea of using the fire apparatus and hoses from some of these young lakes."

"You've done damned well, Taylor," Tony said. "Do you think you can carry on for a few hours more?"

"Sure. I'm good for a week of this."

Tony watched the innumerable chores which were being done by men under Taylor's instruction. He noticed for the first time that the work of reclaiming the human habitations was not being done altogether by the young men, the mechanics and the helpers whom Hendron had enlisted. Among Taylor's group were a dozen middle-aged scientists whose names had been august in the world three months before that day. Unable for the time to carry on their own tasks, they were laboring for the common weal with mops and brooms and pails and shovels.

When Tony went outdoors again, it was four o'clock, though he had no means of knowing the time. Once again he noticed that the air was cooler. He made his way down the almost impassable trail to the stockyards, and found another group of men working feverishly with the frightened animals and the clamorous poultry. Then he walked back to the "village green." So far as he could determine, every effort was being bent toward reorganizing the important affairs of the community. He had at last the leisure in which to consider himself and the world around him.

Perspiration had carried away the dirt on his face and hands, but his clothes were still mucky. The dampness of the air had prevented that mud from drying. His hair was still caked. He walked in the direction of the flying-field, and presently found what he sought—a depression in the ground which had been filled with water to a depth of three or four feet, and in which water the mud had settled. He waded into the pool carefully so as not to disturb the silt on the bottom. The water was warm. He ducked his head below the surface and laved his face with his hands.

When he stepped out, he was relatively clean, though his feet became immediately encased in mud again.

SLOWLY he walked to the top of the small hill from which he had watched the Bronson Bodies on the evening before. He felt a diminution of the sulphur and other vapors in the air. His throat was raw, but each breath did not sting

his lungs as it had during the last hours when they had been lying in the open field. He noticed again a quality of thinness in the air which persisted in spite of the heat and moisture. He wondered if the entire chemistry of the earth's atmosphere had been changed—if, for example, a definite percentage of its normal oxygen had been consumed. That problem, however, was unsolvable, at least for the time.

BY straining his eyes into the distance, and aiding their perceptions with imagination, he could deduce the general changes in the local landscape. The hurricane had uprooted, disheveled and destroyed the surrounding portions except where hill-crests protected small patches of standing trees. One-half of the flying-field had been lifted eight or ten feet above the other, so that its surface looked like two books of unequal thickness lying edge to edge. The open space inside the "U" of buildings which Hendron had constructed was littered with rubbish, most of it tree-branches. One dining-hall had collapsed. The men's dormitory was unsafe until it could be repaired. Everywhere was an even coat of soft brown mud which on the level must have attained a depth of ten inches—and the rain which still fell in occasional interludes continued to bring down detritus from the skies.

What had happened to the rest of the world, to what had been Michigan, to the United States, to the continents and the oceans would have to be determined at some future time.

For the moment, calm had come. The Bronson Bodies not only had passed and withdrawn toward the sun, but they shone no longer in the night sky. If atmospheric conditions permitted, they would be visible dimly by day; but only by day. As a matter of fact, from the camp they were completely invisible; not even the sun could be clearly seen.

But the night came on clear—clear and almost calm. The mists had settled, and the clouds moved away. Dust and gases hung in the air; still the stars showed.

The moon, too, should be shining, Tony thought. Tonight there should be a full moon; but only stars were in the sky. Had he reckoned wrong?

He was standing alone, looking up and checking his mental calculations, when some one stopped beside him.

"What is it, Tony?" Hendron said.

"Where's the moon tonight?"

"Where—that's it: where? That's what we'd like to know—exactly what happened. We had to miss it, you see; probably nowhere in the world were conditions that permitted observation when the collision occurred; and what a thing to see!"

"The collision!" said Tony.

"When Bronson Beta took out the moon! I thought you knew it was going to happen, Tony. I thought I told you."

"Bronson Beta took out the moon! . . . You told me that it would take out the world when we meet it next on the other side of the sun; but you didn't mention the moon!"

"Didn't I? I meant to. It was minor, of course; but I'd have given much to have been able to see it. Bronson Beta, if our calculations proved correct, collided with the moon in a glancing blow. That is, it was not a center collision; but it surely broke up the moon into fragments. Most of them may have merged with the far greater body; but others we may see later. There are conditions under which they would fly off into space; there are other conditions under which they would independently circle the sun; and still others under which they would form a band of dust and fragments about the earth like the rings about Saturn. In any case, there is no use looking for the moon, Tony. The moon has met its end; it is forever gone. I wish we could have seen it."

TONY was silent. Strange to stare into a sky into which never again the moon would rise! Strange to think that now that the terrible tides raised by Bronson Bodies had fallen, there would not be any tide at all. Even the moon tides were gone. The seas, so enormously upsucked and swept back and forth, were left to lap level at their shores in this unnatural, moonless calm.

"However," said Hendron, "when the world encounters Bronson Beta, we'll see that, I hope."

"See it—from the world?" said Tony.

"From space, I hope, if we succeed with our ship—from space on our way to Bronson Alpha. What a show that will be, Tony, from space with no clouds to cut it off! And then landing on that other world, whose cities we have seen!"

"Yes," said Tony.



Illustrated by
Everett Lowry

The Lost Luck Powders

His complexion was described by his friends as a "dark black;" and until he replaced his "Adam-and-Eve" luck powders, his future looked dark black too.

By ARTHUR K. AKERS

"EIGHT-ROCK" SPENCER ceased a frantic frisking of his Sunday clothes, backed up against a lighting-post, and bore down briskly on his mourning. Which brought "Skilletface" Pegram temporarily but importantly into the picture.

"You sounds like one of your lungs done git cotched in a trap!" Mr. Pegram thus opened what were to prove negotiations.

"Old luck done laid down on me!" Eight-rock responded hoarsely to kindness. "Done sold my luck-powder, down in Demop'lis, to git de money to pleasure myse'f here in Bumin'ham wid, and now—"

"Luck's headin' right yo' way now," interrupted Mr. Pegram prophetically. "Rally yo'self wid a bucket; fixin' to shower down copious. Whut run over you, nohow?"

"Old garage—" Eight-rock began.

"Garage? Fire up yo' b'il'er, boy! Steam's gittin' low under yo' brains."

"Drives Mist' Frank Pitts' car up here," elaborated the frog-visaged Mr. Spencer mournfully. "He's comin' along behind on de train. I parks de car in a garage, jest like he say—and now I cain't find de garage!"

"Why aint you look on de parkin'-ticket you gits, den?" Mr. Pegram inquired reasonably. "It say whar is it!"

Eight-rock backed up against his personal wailing-wall, and really opened his mouth.

"Dat's de trouble!" he caterwauled. "Me and de ticket is *both* lost!"

"Look in yo' pocket again."

Mr. Spencer looked—to bring to light only the three dollars he had received for his late lamented luck-powders, and the two dice—loaded—that he used for carrying on his business. The name "Eight-rock" had double reference: both to his



"Done bought yo'-self my job, an' de cap go wid it."

weakness, which was African golf; and to his hue, which was described by his compatriots as "dark black."

But Mr. Pegram's curiosity and salesmanship singled out something else; a dealer in occult powers and powders had to know everything. "Whut all dem little celluloid buttons stuck on yo' coat for?" he queried admiringly.

"White-folks all time handin' 'em out. Wearin' buttons stimulates de luck—"

"So do dese here Goofer Dust powders Number Four." Skilletface came to the point with a parcel. "Make you lousy wid luck. Yo' luck starts wid de fact dat I is puttin' on a fire-sale of dis size pack-age—special to you for one buck."

Eight-rock's eyes brightened. "You say I accumulates de Goofer Dust, and de luck starts?"

"In no time. If you aint crave action, don't buy 'em—"

"Me and de gallopers here," Eight-rock displayed the ruby-colored cubes, "aint crave nothin' else!"

"Cross my palm wid a dollar, den, and you's ready to ride! From now on, look out for a dark man wid a bundle, and

don't cross him none. Whut he offer, you take."

"Luck, come to Papa!" a deal was instantly closed. "Action, whar is you?"

Mr. Spencer switched from a shuffle to a strut. Trouble could wait: Goofer Dust was fixing to rally round! He hit Birmingham's dusky-denizeden Fourth Avenue under forced draft, the lost garage forgotten. And if Skilletface set signals ahead of him, for the next salesman, Eight-rock was too busy to notice.

WHAT impressed him was the way the new powders brought results. Scarcely had he crossed the intersecting Seventeenth Street, when a large stove-colored stranger fell into sympathetic step beside him. A package was under the stranger's arm. Eight-rock's heart did a double flip at sight of it: old Goofer Dust was giving service already!

"Aint no money in share-croppin' cotton no more, is dey?" the newcomer further improved himself.

"Not after de fu'nishin'-gent'man git his'n—"

"Which make a railroad job look better'n ever, aint it?"

Eight-rock automatically shied off. Chunking ballast under ties all day was the only sort of railroad job ever mentioned to him before!

Then he recalled Skilletface's injunction: No dark man with a bundle must be crossed.

"Sho is!" he thereupon reversed himself hurriedly.

"How much money is you got, Big-shawty?" His newest friend began unwrapping the fateful bundle.

"Two dollars—and two dices r'arin' to git plenty more. Me and de gallopers craves action," Mr. Spencer charcoal-sketched his present, future, and weakness. "Whut you unwroppin' dar?"

"Show me two bucks, and I shows you."

Eight-rock produced two dollars, and the stranger produced an imitation-leather red cap, with a badge on its front.

Eight-rock batted his eyes. "Whut dat signify?" he yearned toward it.

"Signify you's in luck. Done bought yo'-self my job, and de cap go wid it."

"Whut Job?"

"Railroad job, like I says—red-cappin' at de Tum'nal Station. Helps de white folks off and on de trains. W'ars de red cap, and collects copious for yo'self."

Mr. Spencer's eyes stuck out an extra inch. He tried on the cap. "Kind of big for me," he hesitated, as this instantly

heightened his resemblance to a small bungalow with big eaves.

"Yo' ears'll hold it up!" The stranger already had his two dollars.

"Shoulders'll stop it, is old ears weak-en!" Eight-rock glimpsed himself in a shop-window mirror, and forthwith gave optimists lessons. Old cap sure was noble! "Craves action for myself! Whar at de station?"

"Five up and five over. Flock yo'self round de white folks, and wrastle de baggage heavy. Remember you's been work-in' dar for de longest, is nobody ax you."

"Got to step on me, to git off de trains!" exulted Eight-rock. "Rallies along de flatfawms twel I gits action. Feets, march! Eyes, keep yo'selfs skinned for Mist' Frank Pitts! Times, git better!"

But, *en route* to the station, a flaw apparently developed in the guardianship of the Goofer Dust. Like an accident-policy, it covered everything except what happened to a boy, it seemed. Mr. Spencer successfully negotiated the crossings of four heavy-traffic arteries, only to come to grief in an alley. At its mouth he suddenly discovered himself run over, trampled, flattened, while a leather-lunged avalanche passed over him—an avalanche raucous with its, "*Pa-pay-y-y-y!* All about the big liquor-raid! All about the big bank-robbery! Read about th' soocycide!"—as it pounded across his prostrate form on its tumultuous way from press to public with the noon editions.

"Goofer Dust, whar is you? Taper down on de action!" quarreled the resultant wreckage as he retrieved his cap and consciousness. "Done lost de garage—done lost de ticket—fixin' now to lose a laig! Feets, git gwine befo' elephants busts loose!"

BUT Mr. Spencer's arrival at the Terminal station put a new face on things as well as a new face on the red-cap force there. It was rush-hour; and in fifteen minutes Eight-rock had accumulated a record of three wrong trains, six baggage mix-ups, and a dollar thirty-five cents.

Yet scarcely had he paused to wipe a perspiring brow when new business appeared. Against the background of the clamor of the newsboys without, the train-shed within, he heard a hail, "Hey, red-cap!"

"Yassuh, boss!" Mr. Spencer skidded toward his hailer with hands out-



Eight-rock produced the two dollars. "Whut job?"

stretched to take his bag. "Number twenty-three, dat's me. Works here nine years, and aint never mess up nothin' yit!"

But the prosperous-appearing prospect seemed still dubious. He held on fast his bag, eying Eight-rock as though in sudden fresh debate with himself.

"Heaps of folks aint even travel, unless I waits on 'em—I's so reliable," Mr. Spencer strove further for the right effect and two-bits.

"That so? Well, reliable is what I want. It's about this bag." As Eight-rock waited anxiously, the convivial-looking gentleman seemed to weigh something, and come to a reluctant decision. "With what's in it, I hate to check it—gets to sloshing around when the check-room boys sling it, y'understand. And yet—"

Eight-rock understood everything. Snake-bite was steadily on the increase; especially on trains and in hotel-rooms.

"I guess I'd better," the white-folks reluctantly decided. "How about you looking after it *personally* for me till the one-forty starts?"

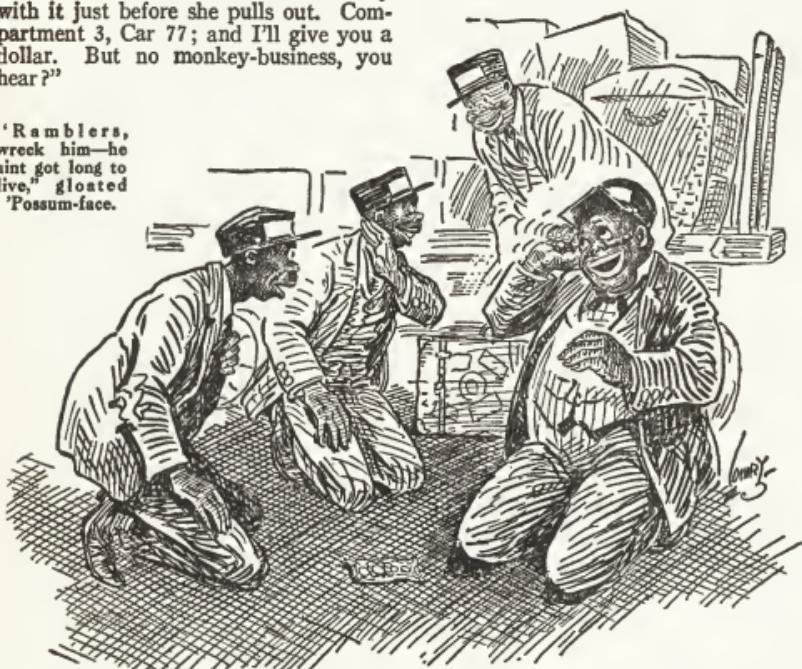
"Has to blast heavy to git me loose from it!" Eight-rock endorsed himself as the ideal guardian for contraband. The white gentleman still looked doubtful. But—

"All right," he finally committed himself. "You meet me on the one-forty with it just before she pulls out. Compartment 3, Car 77; and I'll give you a dollar. But no monkey-business, you hear?"

"'Rambler,
wreck him—he
aint got long to
live,'" gloated
'Possum-face.

crossing here, Eight-rock leaned heavily on his new Goofer Dust, and was too busy strutting to see.

"Whar-at you gwine wid yo' lunch, new runt?" jeered a plump and pouch-cheeked porter.



"Sho is!" Prohibition sure had made the white gentlemen fussy about their drinking-liquor!

Immediately after which, new aspects of his office thrust themselves upon Mr. Spencer. Red-capping was a public office. And a public office was a public trust: witness the bag that had been entrusted to him! Leading up to the fact that an office-holder owed a duty to his public—to let them see him. Particularly the traveling feminine part of it. Therefore, why let his gallopers do all the rambling? Eight-rock found himself unanswerable, and headed for the colored-folks' end of the big station with the bag, on exhibition bent.

But as he neared the mail-room, *en route*, three other red-caps who had been noting his largesse-harvesting and anonymity with jealousy and disfavor, hailed him from behind a baggage-truck. If Eight-rock's guardian angel started waving any warning red lanterns for a grade-

"Aint lunch. White folks gimme dis bag to rally round puusonal, 'Possum-face!"

"'Possum-face, is I? Keep on swellin' up, and you gits big enough for yo' cap!"—more bad blood was made. "But what I wants know is, how lucky is you feel? Is you crave action?"

Eight-rock heard a bell ring where there wasn't any bell. This 'possum-faced boy was speaking his language! Action was offering at last!

"Wuz I no luckier, couldn't stand it!" The ninety cents in his one pocket, and the personally loaded cunning-cubes in the other backed him up in repartee.

"Den peel dat off eye of yourn for Mist' Smoot, Willie!" directed the fat-faced boy to a co-worker. "And help shove dis truck round, Rufus: make room for de risk-ruckus. Me and dis bresh-ape boy mixes my luck wid his mazuma—"

"—Minglin' all de money in my pocket when de smoke blows away and de white-

folks craves dis bag back," returned Mr. Spencer largely. "Old risk fixin' to ride!"

"Country boy, dey bums pennies for carfares when I cleans 'em," warned his challenger. "Back out now, or shower down!"

Eight-rock showered. "Shoots ninety cents!" he chanted above his all—for lunch had badly lamed his one thirty-five. "Fade me, 'Possum-face, while I revives dese bone babies!"

THE other two red-caps stirred excitedly. Was it possible 'Possum-face had picked an Old Master by mistake?

'Possum-face didn't scare, however. "You is faded—like a red shirt in de rain!" Nine of his dimes shone alongside Eight-rock's. "Gallopers gwine gyrate on de gravy-train now!"

"Luck, listen to language!" intoned Eight-rock in rebuttal, cradling his cubes in one ebony paw, close to his ear.

"Lemme see dem spotted ramblers, first," interjected the big challenger cautiously here. Something seemed to have occurred to him: such confidence might be deserved!

"Hand-picked and hand-trained; aint no see to 'em," qualified Eight-rock while he accommodated. "Le' me see yourn, and us both feels better."

"De hand quicker'n de eye," Rufus voiced what was worrying Mr. Spencer, as inspections ended.

"Is if it's my hand," boasted Eight-rock, recollecting his reinforcements. "Feels luckier eve'y minute. Goofer Dust, rally round! Red ramblers, roll reliable. Palpitatin' pellets, perfawm yo' promise! *Wham!* And I—"

But he hadn't! Consternation sat on the wrong face. Eight-rock gasped incredulously, while the 'possum-faced boy raked nine dimes over alongside his originals. "Lets it lay!" he crowed irritably.

Eight-rock swallowed air. He was broke! Leaving him with a big start and a small finish if he didn't do something drastic now. Besides, it *couldn't*—

"Lend me four-bits?" he tried Willie and Rufus first. Old cubes had slipped on the sidewalk, was all. It couldn't be anything else. Wait till next time!

But the other red-caps had other ideas, it developed.

"Lends no losers!" they refused callously.

Eight-rock's honor and supper were both at stake now, until an idea occurred—one that hit a boy right in the pit of

the stomach with its daring. But yet, it *wasn't* daring after all; old gallopers couldn't fail twice in a row! Sudden resolution surged up in him.

"How long twel de one-fawty runs?" he sounded inappropriately at the outset.

"Hour yit. Whut you keer? You aint gwinne nowhar but de pore-house."

"Shows you whut I keers. Showers down de white-folks' bag here, sight unseen, against yo' dollar-eighty!"

Startled gasps rewarded him. "Means you showers down *dat bag*?"

Eight-rock held his proffer heavily aloft, shook it. A faint but satisfactory *clink* came from within it.

"Fades you!" pronounced the fat-countenanced boy thirstily. "I been dry for de longest. Shower down 'midst de drought, country boy!"

Eight-rock showered.

"Ramblers, wreck him—'ca'ze he aint got long to live now!" gloated 'Possum-face.

As a precaution in a crisis, Mr. Spencer hastily rubbed his personal rabbit's-foot over the nearest uncovered head. Then he heard "*Wham!*" and saw two crimson cubes full of bad news turned loose by the 'possum-faced boy. . . . 'Possum-face had won the white-folks' bag!

BEFORE the dazed Eight-rock could recover, a sibilant warning: "*Look out! Beat it! Here comes Mist' Smoot!*" suddenly cut the air. Three porters sped three ways, the bag of the ravished Eight-rock's patron providing the very prop which the fleeing 'Possum-face needed to complete his look of innocence and industry.

But what had racked Eight-rock's anguished soul further was the glimpse he had into the depths of 'Possum-face's depravity, reaching him in an accidentally overheard aside from the retreating Rufus: "*He loads 'em, but old 'Possum-face switches 'em!*"

Mr. Spencer sickened spiritually. So that was it! Instead of Eight-rock taking 'Possum-face for "a ride," he had been taken!

"Goofer Dust, whar is you? Rally round!" implored the shell-shocked Mr. Spencer as he limped bewilderedly about. But no rallying resulted. Like the gallopers, old luck-powders had gotten in reverse. Above the ruins one thing towered to the skies: Eight-rock had to get that bag back before the one-forty left. But how?

With that question still unanswered,

an incoming train slid to a swift halt under a shed without. Eight-rock joined the gold-rush of red-caps toward it.

"Yassuh, boss. Old twenty-three, dat's me," he repeated his formula feebly, as he dived for two bags just set off from the last coach. Then he looked up, and collapsed like a shot horse in front of—Mr. Frank Pitts, his white-folks from Demopolis!

"What the hell?" the taken-aback Mr. Pitts greeted Eight-rock in scarcely less astonishment. "I thought I sent you on ahead with my car! And here you meet me in a red cap, with fool buttons plastered all over you; and working for somebody else! *Where's my car?*"

EIGHT-ROCK'S mouth got loose, and he couldn't recover control of it, due to the fact that the whereabouts of that car was something he just naturally could not discuss right now.

"Well?" barked Mr. Pitts suspiciously.

Beads stood out grayly on the suffering Eight-rock's brow. "H-h-hit's outside, suh," he temporized feebly. How far outside would come up later; but Eight-rock was living not for the day but for the second, just now.

"It better be!" commented Mr. Pitts darkly. "Now, pick up those bags and march—in front of me!"

Eight-rock marched. Down the steps and through the long passageway under the tracks, with Mr. Pitts close behind. Every time he looked back and up at his white-folks, his step quickened and his heart slowed. Up the stairs, across the concourse, into the waiting-room, he suffered. Through the constantly opening doors ahead came fragmentary shoutings of newsboys in the street without. As though, wailed Eight-rock to himself, the whole world hadn't changed since first he had heard their harsh proclaimings of raid, robbery, and destruction when they ran over him in that alley two hours before.

The big clock over the main exit read "1:22"—leaving a boy just eighteen minutes to live. Across the concourse toward him strutted the triumphantly returning 'Possum-face. Red mists swam before Mr. Spencer's eyes as he saw him, and memory mounted of wrong at his hands. Now 'Possum-face had the bag and its alluring-sounding contents. But the imminent crisis was ahead—when Eight-rock should reach the place where Mr. Pitts' car was not parked. There was where the real lying had to start!

Suddenly Eight-rock had that crisis deferred—by the substitution of another. Walking right through the doorway ahead of him, was the husky person of the returning proprietor of the lost bag!

Ostrich-like, with sound-effects of a gurgling nature, the smitten Eight-rock instantly endeavored to climb inside his own red cap. That failing him, he emerged, gray-faced, to see the 'possum-faced boy also circling nearer, the better to enjoy Eight-rock's difficulties. Eight-rock couldn't incriminate 'Possum-face without implicating himself.

"'Cuse me, Mist' Frank," the ashen Eight-rock put down the bags of his Demopolis overlord while he wiped his beaded brow. "Feels myself gittin' sick around de aidges."

"You mean something's happened to my car?" divined Mr. Pitts shrewdly.

"Naw, suh, Cap'n! Old car settin' noble!" protested Mr. Spencer hollowly. "I jest aint—"

"Then show it to me, or—"

Mr. Pitts cut him short—but, in turn, did not finish his sentence. Because somebody else had started one—in the person of the gentleman for Car 77 on the one-forty train. He had fixed an imperious gaze on Eight-rock, and "*Psssttt! Boy!*" he signaled. It was unmannerly but unmistakable.

Eight-rock collided with himself, head-on. The crash had come! He couldn't explain his business satisfactorily now to one white gentleman—let alone two. While both of them were now right on top of him, ganging him. And the perfidious 'Possum-face was coming nearer all the time—'Possum-face, author and originator of half his current congestion of woes!

RAGE flamed over the badgered Eight-rock—rage of the cornered rat, the trapped rabbit. Rage at 'Possum-face, who had switched Eight-rock's own dice so that they had bit the hand that loaded them—'Possum-face, who now had the bag that Eight-rock must return or—

Blood lust at his wrongs swept Eight-rock. Caution and consequences were forgotten. With the yowl of a hysterical wildcat he launched himself at the fat throat of his oppressor.

"*Fight! Fight!*" echoed joyously under the vaulted roof. The startled 'Possum-face went down squalling beneath the ferocity of the surprise attack. "*Fight!*" other voices took up the battle-call, until it mingled with the murmur of feet

on the marble floor, the near-by clangor of engine-bells, the "All aboard for the one-forty, North!" from the concourse; with the raucous, "All about th' big robbery! Read about th' raid on speak-easy!" of the newsies without.

"Says gimme back de white-man's suitcase!" screeched Eight-rock, beside him-



With the yowl of a hysterical wildcat, he launched himself at the oppressor.

self in the impromptu prize-ring formed by delighted travelers. He scratched, gouged, and bit an adversary who, in turn, sank earnest teeth into whatever choice spots in Eight-rock's anatomy presented themselves uppermost.

A situation unparalleled in the station's history rapidly developed.

"Unbite my laig! —Git yo' heel out my ear! —I aint got no suitcase! —Ow-w-w! Ow-w-w-w-w! —Gimme back dat suitcase, I say!" rang the berserk battle.

Helping—or hindering—hands tugged manfully at neck, arm or ankle as the pair whirled over and over in the *mélée*. From

far corners representatives of law, order and authority came on the run.

"Chaw my neck, ag'in, and I smacks you right spang under a tombstone!" rose the anguished outcry of the 'possum-faced boy.

"Fo'-flusher! Cheap crook! Po'ch-climber!" yowled the now half-clad Eight-rock.

Then buttons—celluloid and otherwise—showered about him as strong hands jerked him upright, and shook him into agonized realization that he had climaxed a long spell of ill luck with *real* trouble now. . . . The Law had him!

A white gentleman with STATION POLICE on his cap emphasized it with a restraining elbow which he immediately clamped tight about Eight-rock's neck. Opposite, 'Possum-face was no better off, by reason of a similar firm grip on his belt. Eight-rock's prized red cap was gone. All but

one celluloid luck-stimulating button was gone. His future was gone. In fact, the whole situation was of the type that normally sent a boy galloping frantically for his white-folks.

But Eight-rock had too many white-folks present already! It was they who were causing this jam in his business, a jam that all the Goofer Dust in Alabama couldn't handle now. And yet—wait until the next load of ruin got dumped in on top of his present wreckage! He still had all his original troubles about the lost car, plus a whole mess of new ones about this contraband. He could see and hear his doom swinging into action now, as Stationmaster Smoot thrust himself through the encircling spectators with an incisive, "What's coming off here, anyway?"

"Not half what there's *going* to be!" Eight-rock's Demopolis white-folks was looking right at Eight-rock.

"Dat little new runty boy gone crazy 'bout a suitcase or somep'n," whined the panting 'Possum-face vindictively.

"What suitcase?" The stationmaster seemed to remember something of the sort in connection with a previous suspicious scattering of red-caps.

"One whut dat 'possum-faced boy dar crooks me out of, dat's whut!" yelled Eight-rock virtuously. "Jest when de white gent'man *right yander now* wuz fixin' to come for it!"

ATTENTION was thus directed to the fact that the controversial suitcase had an owner, who wasn't Eight-rock—and to the further fortuitous fact that Mr. Spencer had just glimpsed him over the heads of the crowd, making now or never the time for man and bag to get together.

Eight-rock instantly opened his mouth to broadcast in the interest of such reunion—only to leave it open in expression of new astonishment. The bag-owner was quickening his pace—not to, but from his property!

Eight-rock's brow corrugated at the overload this action threw upon his understanding. Until memory came to the rescue, recalling that the white gentleman all along had desired privacy about that bag; he had said that it sloshed incriminatingly when slung. Right when dry raiders were about! Indeed, Eight-rock further recollects, that sound—and what it promised—had been its big attraction for 'Possum-face.

"Is that man its owner?"

The station-master indicated the disappearing one.

"Y-yas, suh. Sho is," the excited Eight-rock let the cat farther out of the bag.

"Go get him!" Mr. Smoot instructed a third officer. "I'm getting at the bottom of this."

Too late, Mr. Spencer realized that he had inadvertently let the bag-owning white gentleman in for most embarrassing search and seizure. And it all was Eight-rock's fault—something else to hang on him when he got out the hospital or the jail-house, as his fate might be. Every time a boy opened his mouth or parked a car his business got worse!

Then the officer was returning apologetically with the protesting bag-owner. "White-folks sho is look funny in de face now!" escaped Eight-rock, as he eyed his approaching ex-patron. "Whole slew of good drinkin'-liquor fixin' git poured down de sink!"

The stationmaster was turning to the officer who still gripped 'Possum-face by the belt. "Take him along now," he directed. "And bring back that bag. Snappy!"

Eight-rock wilted down another foot. This public victory over 'Possum-face was getting too public. He eyed the one remaining button in his lapel ruefully. Like the Goofer Dust, old button sure wasn't stimulating any luck for him now!

"—*L-a-s-t call for the one-forty, North. On Track Three!*" rang disturbingly from the concourse. That was Eight-rock's patron's train! Last call—

But 'Possum-face was reappearing, still under escort, and puffing beneath the weight of the much-discussed bag. Eight-rock cringed before coming revelation.

"Here! That's my bag!" suddenly rasped its anxious-faced owner. "Give it here! I'm about to miss my train. Quick!"

But combined nervousnesses brought disaster. With a *clink!* the bag crashed sickeningly to the marble floor. Eight-rock shrank fearfully from first appearance of an inevitable and damning flood.

INSTEAD, things grew too rapid for his comprehension. That *clink* released more action than a ten-blow fire-alarm in a loft district. But not the action Eight-rock was expecting. Action beginning with the incontinent flight of the bag's owner!

The restraining elbow about Eight-rock's neck relaxed as his captor was in-

stantly off in heavy-footed pursuit dodging through the thronged room. From somewhere, a plain-clothesman joined him. Across the waiting-room, into the concourse, and out toward the gate for the one-forty train, sped the chase. Then a sudden dart—not toward but away from the gate! And, halfway over the iron-spike-tipped fence that divided concourse from taxicab driveway, the pursuers overtook the fugitive, pulling him down like terriers.

"Open it!" The stationmaster kicked at the bag beside Eight-rock, as the officers returned with their protesting prey.

Closer pressed the curious crowd, its collective mouth watering at even a vicarious approach to contraband, as the officer bent to his work.

THEN a click, a gasp—succeeded by startled silence, a silence in which newsboys' far cries of, "Read about th' big liquor raid!—All about th' big bank-robery!" suddenly grew near, and tied up. . . . Tied up with everything. Tied up with this revelation that Eight-rock had lost his point, but found a bandit! That a recent disturbing *clink* had been not liquid but solid in its origin; solid silver coins nested among bundled greenbacks in a suitcase full of loot, left disarmingly with the obscure Eight-rock for safe-keeping, until time for flight with it in Car 77 on the one-forty train!

Over the dazed and dazzled Eight-rock broke a deluge of excited talk—about a reward—about his causing the capture of a crook and his whole haul. People took his name. People took his picture. Praise showered him, before a crushed and chastened 'Possum-face, who gaped goggle-eyed at what might have been! Even Eight-rock's white-folks was looking at him differently now!

Hope dawned. Old Goofer Dust had been slow getting into action, was all. But it sure had rallied noble now! He had craved action, and now—

Then the Goofer Dust and Eight-rock's button-stimulated luck had a fresh relapse. The fine glow faded. He might be a hero to some folks, but he was still a gone goose to himself, as: "Where's my car, I say?" re-demanded Mr. Pitts, when the captured bank bandit had been led away.

Eight-rock's answering stutter didn't get him anywhere.

"You mean you don't know where it is?"

Abysses reopened and deepened before

Eight-rock. "N-naw, suh; sho aint!" confession came. "I parks it like you say—and den me and de ticket, us *both* gits lost, and—"

"Do you mean I've got to search a thousand storage-garages to find that car?"

Eight-rock's confirmatory moan could mean nothing else.

Mr. Pitts' ensuing glare curled up and silenced his servitor like a bait-worm on a hot rock. It played over him blisteringly, illuminatingly—over his recovered red cap, his ruined finery, the sole surviving button in his torn lapel.

"Come on!" he barked suddenly. And there was a new note in his bark.

"Goofer Dust, whar is you?" short-waved Eight-rock despairingly, as a taxi door slammed on his Demopolis overlord and himself. Mr. Pitts had growled an address, but cold comfort came from the one glory remaining to the crushed Eight-rock—when "quality" white-folks took a boy to the jail-house for losing a car, they took him in style, in a taxi!

Then they were rolling up before a place that caused his eyes to protrude like a scared crab's. Questions racked him. For this was not the jail-house; it was—the lost garage! But how-come? Why—

Mr. Pitts was getting out disgustedly; initiating negotiations then, to reclaim a car by identification instead of check.

OPEN-MOUTHED, limber-jawed, Eight-rock unloaded too; fingered his one remaining celluloid button; and hustled for credit where credit was now indubitably due.

"Knowed all time dat Goofer Dust gwine fix up eve'ything!" he jarred the welkin with delayed endorsement.

"Goofer Dust?"

"Yas, suh! Leadin' de lost right here to de garage whar I parks at, quick as it gits de chance—"

But the sore-tried Mr. Pitts was blazing into sulphurous speech at last.

"Goofer Dust led you?" he rasped. "Why—you, you peripatetic half-wit with the heaves, don't you know you've been lost all day with this garage's address plastered right on you all the time? All I did was read it, and—"

"Read it?" Eight-rock felt himself in an elevator that was dropping faster than his stomach.

"Yes! Off that fool button advertising it—that's been stuck in your lapel ever since you parked my car!"

That Tall Girl Belle

It happened on one of the Sheba Islands, in the South Seas (a paradise that might be, a desert that was) when the gypsy girl and her rogue of a father arrived.

IN the days when cotton was still king, —about the beginning of this century,—one remembers Mrs. Drumgold, a little gingery frightened woman with a cap worn always on one side; she was the wife of Matthew Drumgold, the cotton millionaire. One also remembers Matthew: tall, sandy and bitter—bad-tempered as the lordly fathers of big families frequently were in those Victorian days. Nobody minded it; everyone expected it of them. . . . But one wonders how, in Matthew's case, everyone could have been so blind.

About the neighborhood of Manchester, far into Yorkshire and the surrounding counties, the Drumgolds were well thought of. They were rich. They were respectable—of course; that was a matter of course, then. They entertained neighbors, as one ought to do; attended church, as everyone did. The girls, as they grew up, married promptly and well. The boys went into the factory; one or two into professions. Nobody was more prosperous, in those prosperous days—nobody more happy than the family of the house of Drumgold.

And all the time, Lucy lived in hell.

She was meek and milk-and-watery, to look at; faded now like a reddish autumn leaf. No one, in those Edwardian days, would have suspected her of having been the beauty of Lancashire, ten years before. No one would have supposed that the little frightened creature with cap askew had thrown that cap over the windmills, in the very year of her triumphant espousal with Matthew Drumgold, millionaire.

There were private affairs then. Secrets could be kept, and were. It was

understood that Lucy Drumgold was eccentric—certainly she looked it—and that she had taken a jealous dislike to her eldest child, Isabel, who from birth was extraordinarily pretty and forward. Isabel had reddish hair, but otherwise was dark as an Italian, with black diamond eyes, and limbs sturdy as a little boy's; at nine months she walked; she began to talk soon after. And in the week following the birth of her brother, Isabel was sent away to pay a visit to an old personal maid of Mrs. Drumgold's, who lived at the other side of Yorkshire. She did not come back. Whether it had been intended that she should, or not, no one can now say.

But the whole of England rang, not long after her departure, with the kidnaping of a little girl by a gypsy man, and with the hue and cry that was raised to find him. He was not found.

Mrs. Drumgold, when she heard, gave a scream, clapped her hands to her head, on which the matronly cap even then was beginning to sit askew, and said, before the nurse could stop her, "I knew he would; I knew he would!" The nurse begged her not to excite herself. Ladies in her condition should be careful. And talking nonsense, the nurse thought privately, was a sure sign of temperatures going up!

So Mrs. Drumgold held her peace, had many more children, lived respected—and in hell—all her life, and near the start of the Great War she was found floating face downward in the mill dam of the Drumgold cotton works. "Driven crazy by this terrible war," was the unofficial verdict. Matthew, it was noticed, spent very little money on her funeral.

Illustrated by
Alexander
de Leslie

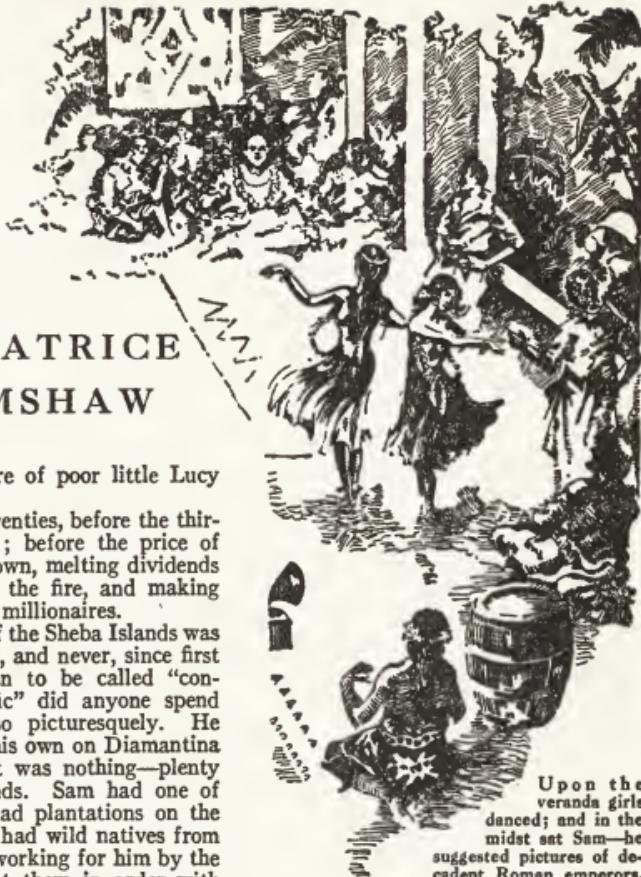
By BEATRICE GRIMSHAW

And so, no more of poor little Lucy Drumgold . . .

It was in the twenties, before the thirties were touched; before the price of copra had gone down, melting dividends as snow melts in the fire, and making beggars of island millionaires.

Sam Hoppner of the Sheba Islands was rich in those days, and never, since first the coconut began to be called "consols of the Pacific" did anyone spend coconut money so picturesquely. He had an island of his own on Diamantina Lagoon; but that was nothing—plenty of men had islands. Sam had one of the biggest; he had plantations on the mainland too; he had wild natives from the outer islands working for him by the hundred, and kept them in order with stick and gun, with a fine disregard of the far-away District Officer. To say that Sam was hospitable is to understate grossly. Everything in his rambling, ramshackle palace of a bungalow, from beds to boots, to beer, to launches, literature, and what you would, was at your service when you called. Only the fact that Diamantina Lagoon was sparsely inhabited kept Sam from being swamped by callers. Always you put up at Sam's when traveling from island to island. If you didn't, he was quite capable of following Scriptural precedent by sending to fetch you in.

DICK AUDAYNE of Amber Island, on that evening when dark overtook him near the Diamantina passage, would have chosen to camp in the cabin of his launch; he knew, however, that if he did there would be trouble with Sam—probably a row; and he hated rows.



Upon the veranda girls danced; and in the midst sat Sam—he suggested pictures of decadent Roman emperors.

Everyone in the Shebas had heard that. Some of them had also heard that if you dragged him into a row against his will, it was likely to be bad for the man who did the dragging. That was the sort of pacifist Audayne was.

Sam's house, built near the beach, blared light and noise that night. Incandescent oil lamps, the brightest money could buy, glowed like small moons on the veranda. Hurricane-lamps were set in glittering rows on either side of the pathway. Two phonographs were going at once; a player-piano, madly driven, roared like a runaway train. A barrel of beer, set up on the lawn, was surrounded by prostrate, inert worshipers.

Upon the broad veranda eight or ten Sheba girls, dressed in grass kilts and necklaces of scented flowers, danced half-heartedly; they were Sam's slaves, more or less, and had to do as they were told;

but this was not dancing, as they knew it in the hill villages from which they had been carried or sold away; this was not the magnificent stamping rush of warriors, with maidens meekly shuffling and stepping in the background, and the great feast, and the tingling horror of human slaughter waiting. . . . Stupidly they danced, bemused with beer. The white men cheered them, and caught at them rudely as they passed. "Put ginger in it, girls!" they cried. "—More beer!" In the islands, where beer is three and four shillings a bottle, incredibly costly in cask, he who gives or drinks most beer is the greatest man.

SAM sat in the midst of it, looking as kingly as he could; it is probable that in those days the royalty complex held him, as it has held greater men and less. He was bloated to the shape of a spider; his enormous belly, covered by a patterned island "lava-lava" that fell to his huge bare knees, seemed to dwarf the rest of his person; his shoulders looked small beneath the rich silk shirt; his head, behind, was a mere button. Reddish hair covered it thinly, but grew thick as rushes upon his bared chest and his huge legs and arms. The coronal garland of frangipanni, worn askew; the dancing-stick, carved and covered with jingling shells, which he held loosely in one hand, suggested vaguely—perhaps not unintentionally—pictures of decadent Roman emperors. He was half drunk, not more; he had been half drunk for days and nights, and would not go beyond that point for a day or two to come—not till the guests had left his lagoon, and Diamantina settled down to quiet and loneliness again. Sam had his own code of hospitality, and this was part of it.

Audayne had seen it all before, but the sight never failed to irk him. No saint himself, he despised Sam almost as much as he envied him. The fellow was so rich, and made such a mean use of his riches. "If I had half of it," Audayne thought for the fiftieth time, as he went up the lighted pathway in the dead heat of the windless night, with Sam leaning forward from his high armchair, dancing-stick in hand, to wave a beer-bottle and shout a tipsy welcome, "if I had half—a quarter—a tenth of what he wastes—I'd see Sydney Heads as quick as steam could take me; I'd smell the wet woods about Plymouth Sound again. I'd— Ah!" For he knew it was all nonsense. He would never see as much as

Sydney Heads again of the civilized world. . . . That door was closed for Audayne.

Sam got to his feet, and with the frangipanni garland falling still more crookedly above his eye, shouted out, "Come along, you—come along! We've got new visitors this time. Sit yourself; there's a lady waiting for you."

Audayne, quite sure that the "King of Diamantina" was talking nonsense—for who ever heard of a lady on that notorious lagoon?—noticed, nevertheless, that the familiar anchored schooner and cutters were not the only boats in. A new small craft, ketch-rigged, with engine and little cabin, showed dim and ghostly some way out from shore. He wondered a little, as he walked up the pathway, a slim active figure in white ducks, with helmet on his head, and nothing to be seen of his face but shadow and a chin jutting out.

So it was that Belle first saw him; the look of him pleased her, but it was not until the biggest incandescent lamp caught his features that she sat up straight in her chair, and sent a second glance that cut like a knife toward the stranger.

"This man," she said to herself, "has done something." For Audayne's was a desperate face. The eyes, caverned deep beneath thick eyelids, told little; they were well trained. The Mephistophelean eyebrows, running fiercely up and sharply down, told something; the mouth, a cut across a scraggy chin, had more to say, even though it was silent. The poise of the head, snakelike, ready to strike, upon a sinewy neck, told most of all to Belle, who knew the ugly side of life. And silently, watching the man as he came nearer into the lamplight, as the shine of it caught his ice-blue eyes and showed them hard like winter lakes, Belle said to herself, "I wonder what it was?"

Audayne's thought, in the same instant, was: "What the hell is this woman doing here?"

AT the moment Belle was sitting in a long chair, very gracefully doing nothing. Audayne could see that she was taller than himself, that she had lovely thin hands, long thighs like a racer, the breast of a young Diana; hair reddish, smooth and heavily coiled; her skin was brown as a Sheba half-caste—but she was no "breed" of any kind, not with those coin-cut features, and those well-bred



One remembers Matthew Drumgold: tall, sandy and bitter—bad-tempered as the lordly fathers of families frequently were in those Victorian days.

hands. Lips smooth, unpainted red; eyes black, with golden lights. A lovely innocent fiery thing, she made him think of some racing filly, still unbroken; the long fine neck of her, her glancing eyes, her proudly lifted head, all carried on the simile. . . . Audayne had been a horseman in the days when Plymouth Sound was not as far away as heaven. "Who'll put the bridle on her?" he wondered, with a curious pang. "Who'll own her, pace her, spoil her, maybe? She'd be easy spoiled." Then he came back to himself—realized that here was a girl of breeding and distinction, let loose in one of the worst island hells of the Pacific, and he would have to do something about it. She must have come off some boat one hadn't heard of, up from the settlements. Well, the sooner she went back, the better. He'd try to get her away before the actual rioting of the night began. Sam's was no place for her!

Sam came forward. He had dropped his dancing-stick, and the frangipanni crown lay on the floor. He looked more like a Twentieth Century trader, less like a decadent emperor of old Rome. Audayne saw that he was fairly sober. "C'mon and have a drink," he said, as always, and then, "Got visitors; gypsy king and queen come to visit the King

of Diamantina. What d'ye think of that?"

"Gypsy?" countered Audayne. "That's English talk. There are no gypsies on this side of the world! What do you—" And then he saw.

OUT of the house, into the veranda lights, came lounging an unmistakable gypsy man. He was tall, dark as a Spaniard, with a good deal of Spanish fire in his deep-set eyes; hair black as crow-feathers; lips, for all his age—and he was well on in years—vitally red. He had a faithless merry look about him, as if he found life more or less of a jest; as if he refused, indeed, to look at it otherwise. Roughly dressed in sailor dungarees, the gypsy mark was not lacking in him; he had rings in his long ears, and a red scarf about his waist with a knife ostentatiously stuck into the folds.

"Is this her husband?" thought Audayne, amazed; he would have sworn the girl was unmarried. Then he saw, by the resemblance between the two dark faces, that the man and the girl were father and daughter. "But here, in the Shebas—gypsies!" he thought, puzzled. "And looking as she looks!"

Sam Hoppner explained. "Them two," he said exultingly, "is the king and queen of the English gypsies. But they don't

Little Isabel was sent away for a visit. . . . She did not come back. Whether it had been intended she should, or not, no one can now say.



Isaac Berners, smoking one of Sam's cigars, nodded silently. His eyes were very bright; he seemed to be laughing silently at the recital of these ancient misdeeds. Belle sat quite still in her chair, but Audayne could see that the gay silk dress she wore was rising and falling swiftly over her breast.

"Carried her down the Meddyterranean and put her in an Italian convent," Sam went on impressively. "Learned her everything, they did, but she up and run away when she was fifteen, and the two of 'em's been trampin' in tramp steamers ever since. That's what I call a proper gypsy, up to the mark, nineteen-twenty-five! Why, there'll be flyin' gypsies next. You tell 'im all the countries you've seen, Belle. You wouldn't believe!"

Belle, throwing him a glance of quiet contempt, remained silent. Sam went on without heeding her.

"Berners, he's got the old original boat, yet, that he pinched from S'thampton Water, and he took her down to Cadiz, and them Spanish gypsies they helped him to camouflage her so that the jawn-darmes shouldn't spot what she was—and they got him the papers of a boat that had been sunk, only the captain got ashore with 'is box, and he was glad to sell them to Berners. So Berners, he's been gypsyin' it proper from port to port ever since; an' when Belle there joined him they went right across the Injin Ocean to New York and the Canal, an' they've been workin' the hislands ever

live there now, because Berners he pinched a launch from S'thampton Water and got away with it—thought he was drowned, did the pillice. It's as good a yarn as ever you 'eard. It would do for them movin' pickshers that they have in Sydney. Berners, he stole 'is own daughter—" The look on Audayne's face arrested Sam. "What're y' gawpin' at?" he demanded; then instantly, drunkenly, forgot and rambled on. "You tell 'im, Berners—tell 'im 'ow you pinched y'r own kid, and run off with 'er—and all England full of it, and rewards, and the pillice and the pypers, and nobody never found anything, only they reckoned you was drowned."

since. Belle she dances a bit, and Berners sings, and they both cross yer hand with silver like they do on race-courses, and they been having a time you wouldn't believe—and Berners he got in this mornin' and he's been tellin' me about it ever since; so I says, 's'I, 'Why not stop here till further orders?' 's'I. 'There's always plenty to eat and drink here!' 's'I. Well, Berners he says, 'Yes, I'll come to anchor for a bit,' 's'e, 'and Belle she can have a house to herself, which I see there's some to spare,' 's'e; that's what you said, wasn't it, Berners? And I says—"

THE long dark man broke in: "Cut it short, brother; you're tiring our friend here." He stood in the light of a hanging lamp, crumbling a sailor's chew on the palm of his hand; an odd, exotic figure, but not out of place here where all was exotic and odd. Sam was going on, but the long dark man broke in again, "Cut it short, brother!" He had moved forward into the range of the hanging lamps; their light shone on his brown face and glistening earrings, deepened the time-marks—"parentheses of age"—on each side of his merry, cruel mouth.

Audayne found himself wondering, as if he'd always known all about it, what sort of impression this fellow must have made on Lancashire twenty years ago. What impression he had made on Lancashire lasses, Audayne didn't need to ask. There was Belle Berners before him, as like the lounging man as a filly is like her sire,—descended from the "Isobel" after whom she had been named, if all was true that had been said of Berners,—a gypsy of the gypsies, and yet, with the very trick of head and hand, the shape of feature, even the voice, of his mother's family. Tales about Lucy Drumgold—born Lucy Audayne—that had been whispered here and there since her death, came into his mind. He didn't remember seeing poor little Lucy, who had made such a wreck of her life and everyone else's, but she had been a typical Audayne, he knew, and so was this—

Cousin—this tall girl Belle, in the long chair; the beauty who roamed the world with her wild father, the Diana who looked as fierce as she was pure, and as tameless as she was lovely—the old man would see to that, since she was his chief source of income—this creature was his cousin!

Upon that, a turmoil of emotion began to rise in the breast of Audayne the is-

land outcast. If he had had any standing anywhere—if he had mattered to the authorities—if he had even been free to take ship and go down to the great cities of the south, like other men—he'd have been able to remonstrate with effect against the criminal folly of bringing a girl like Belle to Sam's notorious island. What! Did old Berners think this place was comparable even to the slums of Panama or Colon, or the "Broom Road" of Tahiti—which without doubt he knew? Did he think he could safely settle that raving beauty Belle in a reed-and-thatch house with Sam and his crew of low whites and head-hunting savages drinking and rioting a hundred feet away—with a score of ship's firemen making hell of the island on every steamer call? It was only two days to steamer-time now—and bad as the place was, it was bound to be worse then.

His cousin! A girl was a girl in any case, but when she was of the family, no matter how come into it, it was trebly incumbent on one to take up her cause. And the first thing was to see that Berners took her back to the boat.

Somewhat or other, Audayne got the gypsy away from Sam, and stood out with him beneath the pouring moonlight, on the white coral path before the house. One does not, in the islands, talk secrets within doors, or upon verandas. Interviews that must be private are held as



Audayne saw that it was the slave-girls whose screams had wakened him.

much in the open as possible. People may look, as long as they do not hear.

"I want to tell you," Audayne said briefly, "that Sam's is no place for your daughter. They haven't begun yet. Wait till the dance warms up." He paused; a sudden twinkle had come into Berners' eye. Though distrusting him profoundly, Audayne made another effort. "She is a handsome girl," he said, "and it seems you had her brought up like—like—" "Like a lady," he meant to say, but his thought, "Like one of her mother's family," tangled with the words, and choked them.

Berners laughed, a deep throaty laugh. "The Romany *chal*," he said, "know how to look after their women." Audayne wanted to tell him to stop putting on the gypsy; he was as modern as a motorcar, and needn't pretend to be—What was he saying? "All the same, I'm obliged to you; you didn't tell me anything I didn't know, brother, but you meant well. I'll take Belle on board, and then amuse myself a bit. If you don't mind, that is."

The sarcasm cut. Audayne had many reasons for being sensitive to sarcasm. But he held his peace. That was one thing that Berners couldn't do, evidently—by the slack red mouth of him!

He waited there in the moonlight until he saw Berners and Belle step into the little dinghy and row aboard the launch. Then, somewhat quieter in mind, he went back to Sam's, had a drink or two, and slipped away, when Sam wasn't looking, to the little shed at the back that Sam had offered as a house for Belle. It was the regular guestroom, and fitting enough for a man, with its roughly carpentered bed and its tin basin set on a box, its door that wasn't a door, only a couple of case-lids nailed together to keep out wandering pigs—but it would never have done for a girl. Audayne was tired; he was almost always tired, as men are who tread the path of life, unhopeful and alone. He slept heavily.

IN the morning, he was wakened by shouts and screams. There had been a good deal of drunken noise during the night, which had not aroused him—but the quality of these screams pierced through his heavy sleep, and waked him instantly. Pajama-clad, he rushed out of the hut. At first he could see nothing to account for the noise. The platinum-bright lagoon lay still and empty in the early daylight; the ivory beach was bare. Little of it showed this morning. There

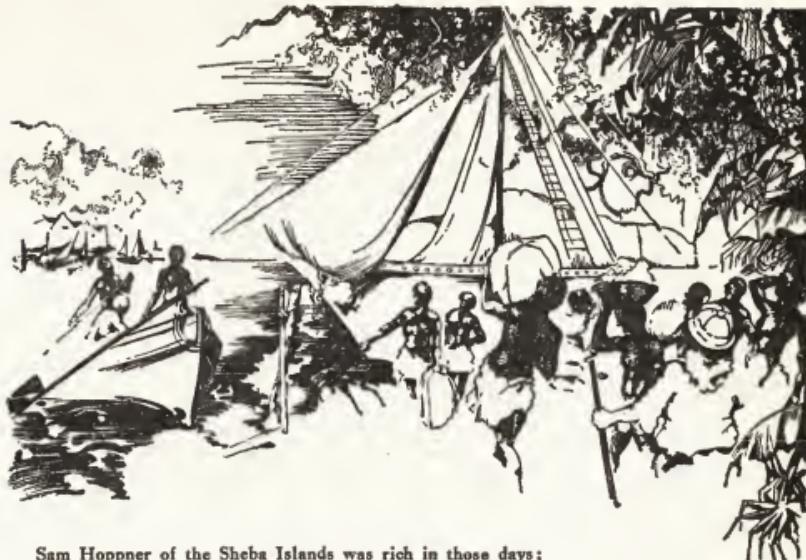
was always a big run of tide opposite Sam's place,—made by the bottle-neck entrance to the lagoon,—and in the night the water had risen, covering most of the beach. There was a bit of something black, like a drowned tree, sticking up a little way out from shore. Audayne saw with surprise that it was this that drew the attention of the slave-girls whose screams had wakened him. They stood in a huddled group before the house; they pointed and cried. . . .

Following the direction of their hands, he saw with a shock of horror that the tree was no tree—it was the stern of a launch! Instantly he guessed what had happened. Berners, not knowing the lagoon, had come in at night, chosen a place too shallow for safety, and moored short. With the rising of the tide, he had been pulled under. Doubtless he had been drunk and had not realized what was happening until the cabin filled with water—he had been drowned like a rat in a trap. . . . And Belle?

THE morning was warm, as all mornings are, in the Shebas, but Audayne felt shivers pass down his back as he realized that in all probability Belle was lying at the bottom of the lagoon with her rascally father. Belle—that splendid creature, with the face of the Audaynes and the fine body of her gypsy ancestors! Dick Audayne was sinewy and active, but he didn't touch five feet seven; few of his people did. Belle, his cousin,—even if it was on the wrong side of the blanket; worth any six of the cousins at home, to look at,—and, Dick judged, as brainy and brave as she looked,—*dead!*

A clutch of sulphur-crested cockatoos, flying out of the palm-tree tops on their early way inland, screeched at the sight of strangers as only cockatoos can screech. Audayne was grateful to them. They expressed his feelings as no words could have done. . . .

Then he saw that one of the girls—a thin, bronzed creature in a grass skirt, with sad eyes under her shock of hair—was coming toward him. She wanted to speak. . . . Dick had always been kind to Sam's wretched dancing-girls; never more than kind. Perhaps that was why little Kalona took the opportunity of creeping up to him,—nervously, lest some of the sodden creatures lying on the veranda should wake up and shout to her,—and said, in a half whisper, "Marster, you look for dass w'ite girl? She no go finish."



Sam Hoppner of the Sheba Islands was rich in those days;
he had natives working for him by the hundreds.

"What!" exclaimed Audayne, his face lighting up. Belle not dead!

The little thing shook her head. With one slim hand she pointed to Sam's iron-built store—and then, as if fearful at what she had done, fell silent.

"Is she there?" Audayne demanded.
"What—who—"

Kalona flung a scared word or two over her shoulder. "Dass w'ite girl's fader he go back an' get drunk; come on board again, w'ite girl sic go long bush. . . . Go 'way. I fright' to tell you!"

"I'll go when you've told me!" Audayne caught her and held her by one thin arm. "Is she in the store? Who put her there?"

"Sam."

The girl twisted away, and fled. But Audayne had heard enough.

It was now sunrise. The sea, apple-green in shade, apple-blossom pink where light struck the shallows, was crisping into restlessness beneath the early brcze. Smells of sandalwood and of dew came from the forest. The reef sang multitudinously. The island day was fair. Within the fence of Sam's enclosure broken bottles lay strewn; newspapers, straw and litter scattered the grass. In the midst, the beer-barrel towered like some shapeless heathen god. Men, or what passed as such, were waking upon the veranda, stretching themselves, and calling for more drink.

Sam—dressed, and apparently less affected by the orgies of the night than anyone—came out of the house, and began waddling among his guests, with a whisky decanter in his hand, and a Sheba boy laden with soda-water following behind. To Audayne, watching from the lawn, he looked like some crazy caricature of a rescue worker on a battlefield.

BUT this was no time for fancies. Audayne crossed the lawn, faced the huge figure in dirty singlet and trousers, and asked sharply: "Where is Miss Berners? Do you know her father's launch is sunk?"

"I do," grinned Sam, showing yellow teeth. "Damn' lucky for her she'd gone ashore and took to the bush! And damn' lucky for me."

"Is it true she's in your store?" Dick glanced at the iron building, the only structure of any strength on the island.

"What business—"

"Who put her there?"

"She went herself, Mr. Paul Pry. Locked herself in, she did. Just at daybreak, when she was takin' a little walk." Sam grinned again, rendered aid to another of the casualties, and helped himself liberally after.

Audayne understood. Belle had been driven ashore by her father's violence; in the morning she had ventured out of hiding, and seeing the disaster to the

launch had wasted no time in vain regrets, but promptly had taken refuge in the only safe place available. How long she could stay there was another question. As to what was going to happen when she got out, there was no question at all—unless Dick could help. But Sam and his "boys"—those half-tamed, yet obedient savages from the mainland mountains—were fifty to one against him. Sam's guests were not likely to take part against their host, and if Sam thought they were, he could easily get rid of them. What chance was there for Audayne? One chance. . . . But there were reasons—reasons which came swiftly, burningly, to his mind—why that chance was repugnant to him. Nevertheless—

"You'll let the girl out at once," he said, keeping his eye on Sam. "What do you mean by making her shut herself up?"

"I mean," said Sam, drawing himself up to his full height, which was greater than his globular figure suggested, "I mean to do the h-honorable thing. As soon as I can get a missionary over from the next group of hislands, we'll be married and live on the square. I mean to settle down, I do."

"You don't suppose—you don't dare to suppose—that she would marry *you*, if you were the last man on earth?"

Sam looked at him with one eye half shut. "She *will*," he said.

For a moment the day turned black before Audayne. Then things cleared. He cast one glance out toward his launch, lying safely in deep water—toward the dinghy drawn up on the sand. He went round the corner of the house and disappeared.

Sam, rather uneasily, continued suc-



coring his guests. "Bring the soda-water, you black swine," he told the boy. "Open another. . . . I wonder what that la-de-da chap means. He can't do anything. He can't." Sam tossed three fingers of whisky into a glass, and held it to be filled. "That'll do," he said hurriedly; he wanted to go and see what Audayne was really up to.

He was not left long in doubt. After a brief silence, Audayne's voice made itself heard on the far side of the house, close to the store.

"Miss Berners!" he said. "Belle!" Somebody answered inside the store. Sam couldn't hear what was said. Audayne went on, "When I give the word, unlock yourself, take my dinghy and row out to the launch. Can you run a Kelvin engine?" Again came an inaudible reply. Sam stood staring. How dared the fellow! "Very well," Audayne continued. "Start her, and keep her ready. Understand? Wait till I give the word."

"The hell you'll give words!" shouted Sam, waddling round the corner of the house. "Who are you, to—" But he stopped, aghast.

Audayne had gone to the kitchen, and come back again with two flaming brands. Swinging them up and down to keep the blaze going, he said coolly: "Miss Berners will unlock herself, come out and go to my boat. Nobody will interfere with her. If anyone does, I'll fling these into the roof before you can





Belle crossed the beach as quickly as a sandpiper. . . . "Fire-bug Audayne!" Sam raged. "Wait till I get yeh!"

touch me." He backed away as he spoke; he was well within throw of the house, but out of everyone's reach.

Sam's house, the pride and glory of his life, had, like every home on the lagoon, a roof of sago thatch; there had been no rain for weeks, and the leaves were crackling dry; the southeast trade, that blew all day, was rising, strong and furious.

Sam knew himself caught. "Fire-bug Audayne!" he yelled furiously. "At your old tricks! 'Oo burned 'is wife alive to get the crimson insurance? 'Oo was jailed for doing it? Fire-bug!"

Audayne took no notice. In the yellow low morning light, his face was sallow pale. He shouted to the girl, "Open the door. Come out. Get her going, and go out of the passage!" He was afraid of only one thing—that Belle would argue, deprecate, want to know what and why. . . . Most girls were like that. And a second lost might lose this deadly game. He did not know Belle, nor the training she had received from the man who lay dead at the bottom of the lagoon. No

daughter of Berners' could have been slow on the uptake, given to useless argument.

Belle had the door open almost before he knew; she crossed the beach as quickly as a running sandpiper, leaped into the dinghy and pushed it off with one swift motion. It was barely a minute before he heard the engine champing its teeth, and saw the launch heading out toward the passage.

"Ah, fire-bug, dirty convict!" raged Sam, with a flaming crackle of adjectives, hotter than the dying brands Audayne still held. "Ah, wait I get yeh!"

BUT Audayne had no intention of waiting. Before the flames had died, he dropped the brands, and started running hard toward the far side of the neck of land that lay beyond the passage. He could catch the launch there, swim out to her, and get away. He hadn't any firearms, and they would have been little use against Sam's regiment if he had; he trusted to his own swiftness of foot, and the surprise he had given them all.

It held—just. Belle saw him swimming, followed by half a dozen black heads. She steered the launch in, dragged him on board, and promptly bashed the head of the nearest Sheba boy with a boat-hook. The boy turned back. The launch went on.

Until they were well clear of the shore, neither spoke. Then Audayne went into his cabin and shifted to dry clothes, took the wheel and set the bow of the launch toward his own island, lying dim and delicate blue on the horizon, a score of miles away. Holding the wheel in one hand while he lit a cigarette with his lighter, he said, between puffs:

"Thanks, Cousin Belle; you did splendidly."

She did not accept or deny the relationship. She gave him one long look—what eyes she had! True Romany, black and sweet as black honey; no trace of poor little Lucy's pale-blue eyes there! —and said surprisingly: "What did he mean by calling you—the thing he did?"

Audayne grew slowly red. "All the world knows," he told her curtly.

The long green shore of Sam's island slid past. The blue sea opened beyond. On its wide swell the launch began to shimmy-shake and sway.

Slowly Belle said: "I remember; I read the newspapers."

There was silence for a minute or two. Audayne thought despairingly, "It has

come again. It always comes." Before his eyes passed, in swift painting, Sydney Heads, Southampton and the ships—the wide, wet English meadows where he would never ride again. Then, his island. Beautiful, lonely—a paradise that might be—a desert that was. For how could he companion with black Sheba girls, or with the only sort of woman who would—

Belle was speaking. "I suppose," she said, "your wife must have been very badly in debt."

Audayne almost let go the wheel. The launch yawed. He swung her back; met her. He turned to Belle, still holding the wheel, and said, "In heaven's name, how did you know?"

"You aren't the kind of man," said Belle, "who would burn his home and risk his wife, for insurance."

"My good cousin Isopel," Audayne said incisively, "twelve good men and true, not to speak of the whole British Isles, believed that I was. And it wouldn't have been a bit of good telling them that she—"

"Was she careless, or only mad?" asked Isopel.

Audayne replied, "She drank. She was caught. And—I was in debt horribly. I didn't find out till afterward, that she had debts of her own—blackmail. No one ever believed anything but that I did it. And I don't suppose anyone ever will."

"We are hopeless vagabonds both, Cousin Audayne," Belle said. "We've got nobody to believe in us, except—"

The launch was heading out toward open sea. The distant island began to show up, long and dusky-blue. There was a brief silence. Belle broke it.

"As long as my father lived," she began, "I thought I owed him—duty." She was silent again for a while. The launch clanked on. "He did your family—the family—a great deal of harm," she said. Then her lips closed; she looked as if she could, if she would, remain silent for evermore.

Audayne understood. He reached out one hand, and caught hers.

"If it's a sacrifice," he said, "I take it."

"It's—not," said Belle.

"Then I'll take it just the same," Audayne told her. "And maybe you know there's a mission on the island beyond mine." . . .

If ghosts exist, they take no count of time and place. Maybe the pale little ghost of unlucky Lucy hovered above that lonely tropic sea, and—smiled.

Murder

A Western sheep-man's dog, his work and his wars, is the subject of this lively story by the one-time forest-ranger who gave us "Bridges Over Purgatory" and "Black Treasure."

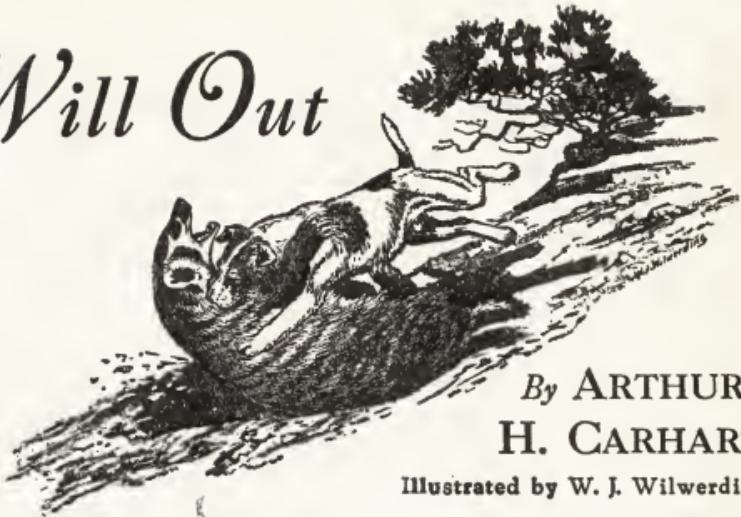
THE Duke had one acknowledged enemy: a villain working with underhanded tactics that were certain to make trouble.

Like many a young rascal with a family tree, the Duke had deserted the comfortable life of an aristocrat to join the gay vagabond company of the Boss, and Big Jim, the herder who handled one of the bands of sheep belonging to the Boss. Those who knew called the Duke's genealogy a *pedigree*, for the Duke was a wire-haired terrier. But that made no difference to the Duke.

The Boss was the Duke's man—the little wire-haired bundle of fight had adopted the big jolly fellow. Dog and man acknowledged some intangible but powerful brotherhood bond that required no spoken language, and did not balk at the fact that one was a scrappy dog and the other a husky, good-natured man. They were comrades, recognizing no barriers between them. Ever since the Major who held the papers to show that he was legal master of the Duke had given the little dog his choice and the Duke had watched his lawful owner ride out of sight around the bend in the trail and then had turned thoughtfully to the Boss, that man-dog fellowship had deepened and broadened as they had made the round of the sheep-camps, while the Boss checked up on his several herders and their flocks.

The Duke liked the trails the Boss traveled; he liked the way the big man tousled him and roughed him until the

Will Out



By ARTHUR
H. CARHART

Illustrated by W. J. Wilwerding

Duke yelled and chortled and pranced around the evening camp-fire. The Boss gave the Duke titbits of camp grub. He allowed the four-legged blue-blood to come inside the herders' tents when cold night rains slashed over the plateau. Mountain rains were grossly indifferent to the Duke's high lineage, and the Boss was considerate. All factors considered, the Boss was a dog's man; he had a nice smell, friendly, clean and mannish. But his hearty friendliness held a tinge of suspicion now, and the Duke was perturbed.

The Boss was worried more than the Duke. Criminal charges had been made against his wire-haired friend; serious charges, carrying the penalty of death if proven.

"If I thought he was killin' lambs I'd shoot him this minute," declared the Boss emphatically to Big Jim as they sat at the camp-fire that leaped and waved its cheery banners in the night blackness that had settled down in the great stone-frescoed cradle of the South Fork cañon. "But it's all circumstantial against him; nothing positive. Sheep bables simply have disappeared—and the Duke has laid himself open to deep suspicion."

Big Jim reached down to stroke the silky coat of Fannie, the dainty mongrel Mexican shepherd dog that helped Big Jim take care of their flock. Big Jim liked the Duke almost as well as he did Fannie; he trusted the Duke as much. But the serious charge of sheep-killing, when it is proven against a dog, must be considered gravely and with proper judi-

cial impartiality. The sheep-killing dog is a criminal under the shadow of death.

"I'd never thought of accusing the Duke," said Big Jim earnestly. "But Juan caught him digging under a pile of loose earth over beyond the creek yesterday, when Juan's burro train came along—an' I'm simply tellin' you what me an' Juan has seen. The Duke was yappin' and scratchin' dirt like a steam-shovel, an' after a bit he uncovered the leg of one of the best of our grade lambs. Didn't act guilty, though. You know most sheep-killin' dogs are kinda sneakin'. The Duke wasn't. He barked like a trooper, just as though he had a whoppin' pride in what he'd done. But as I say, I'm tellin' you just what we saw—an' Juan'll tell you the same."

"Looks incriminatin'," admitted the Boss.

"Does," agreed Big Jim.

"But I'll not shoot him—" The Boss stopped. The idea of executing the Duke, even for sheep-killing, did not seem to be the right sort of an idea at all. The Boss had suddenly thought of the time the Duke had valiantly tackled a full-grown bear, and by this bravery had saved the Boss a terrific battering or possible death. "Don't suppose we could break him of it?"

"Haven't proved he did it, yet," pointed out Big Jim. He hated to say anything against the Duke, but he couldn't stand for a sheep-killing dog.

"Right, Jim," agreed the Boss. "I'll not pass sentence until—" His voice



trailed off. "That dog's got brains," he continued after a minute. "He and Fannie both. Wish they could talk! We could ask the Duke right out for the truth."

"Yeh," agreed Big Jim. He had wished that same about Fannie many times. "Ef the Duke could talk he'd not beat around the bush none. No sir, he'd come right out an' state the truth."

The Boss dropped his big brown hand to topple the Duke with a playful cuff. His Highness rolled, yapped, lunged, dived away. It was the beginning of night play. Fannie left Big Jim to dash madly around the fire, the high-lights flickering on her silky coat.

The Duke dived at the fire, whisked away, plunged headlong into the Boss. The Boss pretended to be bowled over. The Duke growled mightily, tugged, snarled as though he was ripping the life out of a grizzly. He wanted to show the Boss that there was nothing in the thin filament of suspicion that had suddenly shot an intangible and elusive suspicion between them. For the moment both man and dog forgot the threatened break. The rough play brought yelps of delight from the Duke and made Fannie bark excitedly, until a coyote leading her half-grown whelps along a rocky ridge across the cañon stopped and sent a crazy answering challenge into the night. At the sound the Duke ran headlong in the direction of the sound, stopped at the border of the firelight, barked angrily at the interloper, then came back to throw himself into the rough carnival with happy abandon.

But tomorrow the Duke would face enemies. That coyote gang that slipped along the ridge and had the temerity to

yelp into the night would be skirting the tangle of high-country spruce in the breaks above. They were sneaky. They had to be watched. The Duke was always daring them to come and fight, and the coyotes were always drifting out of reach like smoke-shadows.

The bull up Indian Creek was another giant to conquer. The bull would turn and try to charge the excited little dog. That two-horned dragon would have liked to reach the Duke once—just once! A most unroyal toss in the air would have followed. There was a thread of jest in that charge of the bull, though he was more than half in earnest after the first ten minutes of round-and-round scamper. But to the Duke it was all gay jousting—a war game. The Duke entertained an idea that if he could ever have secured just the right grip on that bull he could have shaken the life out of the bull's big carcass.

A bobcat that had a den up under a ledge back of John's mountain was another regular opponent of the Duke. Three times the Duke had followed the scent trail of that cat. One day only he had caught up while they were in the open. The cat had treed. The cat and dog argument might have ended right there, had not Big Jim given up the trail long before. The Duke tried to climb the tree, but without success. The timorous antics of the wildcat, which could have taken a ham from the Duke in one bite, afforded jolly fun. Even when the Duke had followed into that smelly den in the rimrock and had faced two baleful glowing green eyes, the cat had backed to the farthest corner, while the Duke pressed close to the vicious slaps of clawed paws and barked in a fine frenzy of excitement.

Those were commonplace feuds. There was another more serious. One beast in the whole wide-flung plateau kingdom of the White River defied the Duke. That was the squat, pointed-nosed rowdy, the badger. This ugly customer had hissed at the Duke in a most profane and plebeian manner on the one occasion when they had come face to face; then each, respecting the other's fighting stamina and never-give-in courage, had apparently agreed not to stir up the hounds of war between them. The courage of the Duke was dashing, reckless, a dare to life and a challenge to death wherever it might come along a trail. The courage of the badger was that of a very efficient rough-and-tumble warrior whose short legs had

made him fight more often than they had permitted him to run away.

Now a clash was coming. That battle was inevitable; the Duke would force it.

As the play ended and the Duke prepared for doggy dreams he thought of the badger and growled. Through the night he was restlessly dreaming of mad battle with this unlovely enemy.

EACH dawn is a miracle on the Flat-top mountains that lift their heads above South Fork. Light creeps into the sky shyly, while winds sing soft chants telling of the mystery of the night just passed. Tints softer than the inside of pearly sea-shells glow in the breeze-shredded tresses of little clouds. Larger clouds wallow in the blue sea of the sky like rudderless boats that have drifted from a fairy fleet. The spruce woods stir as though tree spirits were turning over to snatch another moment of slumber before day winds, riding gayly from the plains below, come rollicking up to charge through the woodsy shadows.

It is the time of day when deer mothers lead their spotted children through morning quiet to some place where a little stream seeping out from a clutter of mossy rocks makes miniature waterfalls. Magpies awake to shrill and curse. They hide their evil natures beneath sedate black and white, and it is only when they squawk and call each other vile names that one realizes their true knavery. Eagles, stiff with the night chill, begin the first spirals of their stately climb into cloud country. Rabbits and other timorous woods-folk that are hunted in bright day or sooty night, sneak out during the dawn armistice to nibble at ten-

der shoots that are green and brittle around springy places or hop in silly security along the marge of singing brooks.

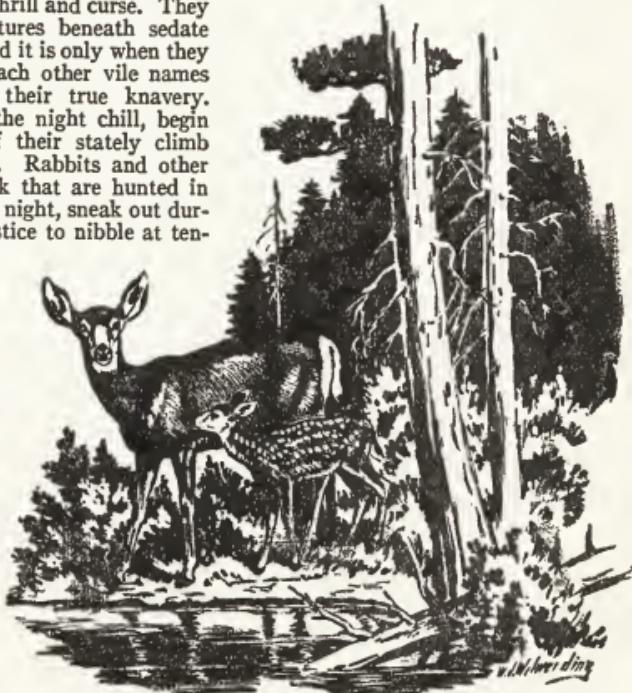
The Duke marched sedately from the herder's tent to perform the ceremony of the dawn. It was simple, but very important.

He stopped in the tent door, rigid. He listened. The stream purled and chortled. That was quite all right. He walked slowly around the fire, sniffed, and checked off the fact that no prowlers had presumptuously profaned the feudal stronghold of the camp. The next act was to inspect the sheep. Fannie always had that done many moments before the Duke performed the dawn rite, but the Duke included it in his own ritual for good measure. Then followed scratching around a favorite scent-post.

The next step in this rite was sniffing the air. The Duke did it thoroughly and meticulously as an old gourmand distends his nostrils to inhale the aroma of a favorite dish. Clean, sweet, swept by a million needle brooms of pruce and fir, it was an elixir the Duke drank deeply, the while he sniffed inquringly.

He growled. There was the scent of that badger on the breeze! He strutted

Dawn is the time of day when deer mothers lead their spotted children through the morning quiet to some little stream.



a little, his small throat rumbling, his nose twitching and his stubby tail ramrody and challenging. Since two days ago when he had discovered nefarious doings on the part of that badger, this scent had been a promise of impending strife.

Then came a sound that sent the Duke hurrying toward battle—a sound he knew presaged imminent conflict.

Over the creek, up through the willows, his heart pounding, every fiber of his stout little body strumming at the charge, he leaped. He was unmindful of the sheep as they scattered. He splashed through the icy waters, disregardful of the wetting; he careened over the old patch where the gopher had dug up little black mounds of valley soil; he came leaping and pouncing into the open above the flock's bed-grounds. There sheep milled. A lamb struggled silently, voiceless, as death clawed and bit at it, dragging it to darkness.

WITH a war-cry the Duke threw himself at the squat criminal that had attacked the baby sheep.

The badger was stubbornly ripping and tearing at the lamb, trying to jerk the little fellow from his front feet. All the red-eyed blood-hunger of his weasel relations surged in the badger; the vicious killer lust swirled in his heart. He turned on the Duke with a snarl, at the first snap of teeth. The Duke yapped, cursed doggily, and charged again. The badger hissed and said nasty insulting things. They circled, each reluctant to strike the fatal first blow. The Duke could wait no longer. He leaped; they collided; the badger rolled away. But as he rolled one of his feet lashed out, and the stout claws that can rip and tear at roots, roll rocks, or claw through gravel, caught the Duke on the flank. The Duke yelped in a most unaristocratic manner. Then there was another moment of desperately tangled clash.

Big Jim and the Boss fought across the creek and through the thick willows. Raw trouble spilled all over the slope where the Duke lunged and voiced his battle-cry. The two men came out of the thickets into the open. They saw the Duke, running around crazily. The badger had slid into his burrow; Big Jim and the Boss were too late to see the flattish form retreat to his citadel.

The Duke went wild. He dashed to meet the Boss to tell him in excited barkings and yappings what the trouble was—how he had caught the enemy in the

act of frightful murder and how the enemy had stood his ground until he had caught the threat of the oncoming men. The Duke dashed to the wounded lamb, nuzzled it, turned to the Boss, dropped his blunt little nose to nudge the lamb in an effort to get the lamb on his feet. The Duke had dared real danger, real and mighty war, to save that lamb's life. It would be an ungrateful sort of sheepling if it would not get up on its feet and act thankful! The Duke, still yapping, dashed back to the Boss. He was almost out of his head with the importance of the skirmish just past. For days he had suspected that badger of lamb-killing. Now he had surprised the miscreant red-handed! He wanted the world to know that that badger was a scoundrel, a common killer, a menace to the range.

But the Boss didn't understand—nor did Big Jim. They were sober and thoughtful.

"Well, I never thought I'd live to see this!" the Boss exploded after a moment. And then he made heartfelt remarks that some might have considered profane and blasphemous, but which Big Jim considered exactly appropriate.

"Juan maybe was right about this pup diggin' up that lamb," suggested Big Jim to the Boss.

"I don't want to hear any more about it," stormed the Boss. "I've been sold out by my best friend, an' there's nothing more to be said. Sheep-killin' dogs only meet one end—you know that. They die sudden an' violent. —Come here, you!" He made a dive at the Duke.

Consternation gripped the Duke. Never had the Boss spoken to him that way! There had been moments when the Boss mauled and cuffed and swore, but that was all in make-believe. There was a deadly quality in the voice of the Boss now. Fannie, slinking near the Duke, slithered away. She looked at the Duke standing there, his stout little legs sprawled defiantly, his head cocked sidewise, his ears up, his nose sniffing, inquiry large in his wide eyes. Fannie knew; without words of explanation: For some reason these men were blaming the Duke.

Fannie crept to Big Jim, her paws patting the ground, whining, her throat quivering with her plea for the Duke. There was a great and terrible misunderstanding between the Duke and the Boss. Some one must do something. . . .

The Boss took a quick swipe at the Duke. The little dog dived away, snarling in earnest. He understood now. The



The Duke tried to climb the tree
but had no success.

Boss had suddenly gone mad. There was injury and perhaps quick demise in that angry charge of the big man. This wasn't the Duke's man—he was strange—some one changed, and different—a suspicious, storming, swearing ogre who was intent on scooping up the Duke and breaking him to bits! The Duke was no idiot. It was time to stay out of reach.

He dived away, dodged. The Boss, angry beyond words, hurt beyond reason, picked up a stone.

"You darned little traitor," he cried. "You cock-eyed, ungrateful little son of a whelp, if I'll just get my hands on you I'll show you how to turn from a dog into a stinkin' sheep-killer! Come here!"

The Duke didn't. He kept on going. "I'm goin' to get my gun," said the Boss, starting back toward camp. "No

sheep-killin' dogs can hang around me—no sir. Not even *him!*"

Big Jim sensed the bitter resentment that had come into the thoughts of the Boss. There was not a man in the whole crew of the ranch whom the Boss would have trusted more than the Duke. The Boss was angry; but beyond that he was hurt, and ready to strike blindly. His best friend had turned against him!

Big Jim started to follow the Boss, to suggest that action be deferred. At his side Fannie tried her best to tell Big Jim how this terrible mistake had occurred—that the Duke was not a criminal—not a sheep-killer! In part Big Jim sensed that; he could not believe the Duke guilty. But the evidence had been there before their eyes as they had come hurrying up from the willow thickets. And they had not suspected the real criminal, for only occasionally are badgers sheep-killers.

However, the Duke was the Boss' dog; and the Boss was the man who had more to say about what happened in Big Jim's camp than Big Jim himself. . . . The brown-visaged herder slowed thoughtfully. The Boss came crashing back through the willow thickets, his rifle in his hands.

"Don't believe I would," suggested Big Jim mildly.

The Boss swore frightfully. His dog a sheep-killer—just like an ordinary scrub mutt! The Duke was a tramp, a degenerate! The Boss was mad all the way through now. Vainly Fannie whined, ran nervously in circles, came to nudge Big Jim. The Boss went panting up the slope, the rifle cocked. He stopped at the point where the lamb twitched and tried vainly to make his paralyzed spine send a message to his dead rear legs that he must get up and run. There was one quick, crashing report, and the lamb lay still. The Boss looked up red-eyed, his jaw clamped, his squinting gaze trying to find the black, tan and white of the Duke.

But the Duke was nobody's fool; he had embraced voluntary exile. The Duke could not fathom the reason for this astonishing change. He only knew that in the act of carrying out his job of protecting the sheep and the camp, in fighting for property of the Boss, he had been made a fugitive from this storming, angry man who had suddenly slipped inside the big body of the Boss.

The Boss called—but there was a strange quality in his voice.

The Duke sneaked past a willow thicket, crept under the broad green leaves of a lonicera bush, succeeded in splashing only twice as he leaped the creek, and then started, a spotty, slinking shadow, up along the creek, away from the camp.

Later in the day the Duke watched the camp from a spruce thicket. The Boss sat on a section of spruce log, his head in his hands. Big Jim had been out to travel around the sheep as they grazed peacefully on the upper bench in plain sight from the camp. Fannie had come out to follow the Duke's trail to the edge of the spruce forest and then had gone back to the camp, whining in perturbation.

The sun shone, the lambs played as though death had never been there, and gay winds rifled the wild flowers in the parks or whispered secrets in bowing tree-tops.

But the Duke wandered in solitude and loneliness. He knew until that fear, hatred and misunderstanding which had sprung up between himself and the Boss was smashed he could never return to the exalted position he had considered rightfully his own. The Duke would accept nothing short of full forgiveness. Life with the Boss angry was no life at all—it was a cowering, sneaking existence drowned in constant fear. The proud little heart of the Duke could accept no such situation.

In some vague undetermined manner he connected that evil stripe-faced clownish miscreant the badger, with this break with the Boss. At thought of the badger the Duke growled luridly. There would be a reckoning!

NIIGHT shadows slanted. The campfire burned redder in the dusk. The afterglow in the sky pulsed and waned, while clouds bathed in puddles of gold huddled down to a purpling nest in the west. Night winds began to sigh of forgotten tragedies and forlorn spaces where neither man nor beast traveled.

The Duke got up stiffly and started circling toward the camp.

"Where do you suppose he is?" the Boss asked.

"Oh, he's out here somewhere on a butte above us, or over there in the willows," consoled Big Jim. "If you want your dog back why don't you try callin' him?"

"I don't want him back," said the Boss darkly and surlily. "He's not my dog;

he's a sheep-killin' mutt. If the whelp comes, I'll shoot him."

The Boss got up and stalked off in the night. Back of him Big Jim wrinkled his brown brow and stroked the silky mane on Fannie's neck. He had watched the Boss all day; had rightly judged the emotions in the mind of the big brown man who had been so much of a hero and a boon companion to the fearless, stiff-legged little wire-hair. Yet Big Jim knew that all the evidence which had piled up would cause the Boss to carry out his stern resolve to kill the Duke the moment he saw him. A dog that killed sheep—that was caught in the act of worrying a badly bitten lamb—could expect no other fate. If allowed to run, one sheep-killing dog can lead other dogs astray.

When Big Jim sought the bed-roll in the little tent, the Boss was still sitting staring gloomily at the glowing coals of the camp-fire, his rifle across his knee.

LAFTER the coals turned ashy gray, then died out. In the brush near the edge of camp, the Duke crept warily. He had lost a little of his cocksureness. He was a lonesome, heart-hungry little dog that had lost the greatest treasure in his life—his friendship with the Boss. He whined as he caught the man-scent. He would have come running happily at one word of welcome. The Boss turned as he heard the whine. He saw the point from which it had come; he thought he saw eyes glint in the faint firelight. But he assured himself that he could not be certain. Resolutely he turned his back. He suddenly hoped that the Duke would not come out of those shadows.

In the willows, his head drooping, his heart scoured, the Duke sneaked away. He had whined—invitingly. The Boss had heard him—and had turned his back.

The Duke headed out, heavy-hearted, on a lonesome trail. Weird whisperings of night swept around him. Coyotes howled. Leaves rustled. The fir needles lisped and sighed . . .

But as the time for the dawn rite came, the Duke came back. He knew he could not head out on those trails to the far-away future without the Boss riding the big clumpy-footed brown horse that formed the third member of their grand adventure trio. The little dog stopped, sniffed, crept closer. And then came the sound he had heard the morning before—a sound of strife and wilderness death,

With a growl the Duke rocketed toward



The badger turned with a snarl. The battle was on.

the point where a baby sheep was flopping helplessly in the sharp teeth of the bandit badger. The Duke's body was not large; his voice would be lost in a gust of north wind. But he made up for the body-weight he lacked, by the velocity of his charge; and he made up for the size of his voice by the frenzy that filled this shouting, yammering, blood-thirsty call of battle.

He hit the badger. The evil beast turned on him, snarling. There was a moment when they tumbled and rolled—a fighting, clawing, indiscriminate mass of flying fur, digging claws and snapping teeth.

The lamb rose, staggered, fell. The badger saw it move. He leaped at the lamb, slicing, cutting, slashing; the squat beast was blind with the fever of killing.

The Duke squealed with delight. He pounced; the hold that he wanted—the nape of that frowsy neck—was toward him for an instant. The Duke's teeth locked over the point where the brown stripe came back from the peak of the badger's forehead.

With supreme confidence he started to whip his antagonist from his feet and shake the life out of his pudgy form. With serene disregard, the badger simply turned his tight, squat form inside of his loose skin. There were seconds when the surprised Duke kept his hold, vainly trying to lift the badger so he could snap his neck by a toss and a jerk.

And then the battle developed into a spitting, clawing bit of furred fireworks as the Duke, realizing that this was no orthodox fighter—a beast that would merely turn, to get out of a hold on the back of his neck—abandoned the hold and went diving, jumping, and nipping at this beast which seemed to puddle down and snap, claw, wiggle and threaten.

It was dive, slash, and jump out, before those raking claws could cut and torture the Duke's hide. The badger was a close-in fighter, a broad-swordsman—the Duke a cat-quick duelist who feinted, parried, danced away and again came plunging with rapier teeth. It was new warfare for the Duke. He had usually been able to dive once, grab a neck-hold, and then with stout legs braced, sink teeth in until there was a cracking and his antagonist was limp. But there was no neck on this squat-shaped devil that hissed and snarled, clawed and bit like a demon!

Down the slope they tumbled. The Duke struck, dived out, struck. The badger came lunging awkwardly, his short powerful legs giving a comical rolling motion in his flat body. For an instant they rolled and scratched and bit and chewed. Then they were up, circling, the Duke attacking—the badger pivoting and baring nasty fangs, daring the dog to come to grips.

The breath of the Duke whistled and the badger was wheezing. It was vicious

torture, a trying ordeal. The high altitude, the thin air, made blood pound in their heads. It was a fantastic, dancing gavotte of death in which these two swirled and pirouetted in odd circles around and around on the slope.

The Duke yelled. He wanted the Boss. Here was the devil that had been murdering lambs; here was the sharp-fanged plug-ugly that had caused the breach between the Boss and his stout henchman, the Duke!

Fannie came tearing through the thickets. She added sharp barks to the Duke's war-cry. Back in the willows sounded the voices of the Boss and Big Jim, as they ran recklessly.

The Duke heard and yelled still louder. The badger was retreating toward his den! It was partly hidden under a rock—Big Jim and the Boss might see it if the Duke pointed it out to them; they might understand. But the Duke did not stop to reason; there was too much battle-madness in his little hard-cased head.

BLOOD was in his eye, mingled dog-blood and badger-blood. Red drooled from his lip. This was his mortal enemy. The great test had come. No dog even five times the Duke's weight has a real show with a badger when there is close fighting. But the Duke's thrust and parry, adopted instantly by the little fellow because of the emergency, bothered the clown-faced lamb-killer. It was no ordinary way for a dog to fight.

They tumbled and clawed over a little patch of rocks, through some spiny currant-bushes that raked at their hides. The Duke struck. His teeth clicked; he found a hold. The badger turned inside of his loose hide, and raked and clawed. The Duke jumped clear, snapping, snarling, yelling fiercely. Again he slashed in. They tumbled. The Duke tried to flank the badger and drive him away from the den. The badger hissed, tore with his stout squat rear legs, took off another strip of hide.

Out from the brush a hundred yards away crashed the Boss. His rifle was in his hand. He caught a view of the lamb struggling up the slope, blood flowing from its cuts.

"Hey, Jim!" yelled the Boss. "Hey!" And then the Boss ran.

The badger saw him. Man, one enemy he could not whip, had come! He dived for his hole. The Duke yammered wildly. The enemy was retreating! He slashed into the badger's flank, and they

tumbled, almost to the mouth of the hole. They rolled, howling and spitting. They fell into the mouth of the hole.

With a wild battle-shout the Duke caught locked teeth in the badger's rump and tried to pull. But the stout tractor-feet of the badger dragged him down relentlessly.

The enemy was getting clear; he was escaping into his castle, where the Duke could never hope to bring him out! The Duke tugged mightily. The badger pulled. They went down a little farther into the earthy dungeon. Again the Duke braced his legs. He could not budge that pancake animal, the flat stout body of this bully. They skidded farther down the hole.

At the mouth of the burrow the Boss talked excitedly to Big Jim. The exoneration of the Duke had come quickly, but not soon enough to keep the Duke from being dragged to a torturing death there in the badger-burrow.

"Shovel!" shouted the Boss as he started to rip the stone away from the mouth of the den and to scrape madly with his fingers. "Get a shovel, Jim! And run! No dog can last with one of them devils after they're inside of the den."

The badger reached a place where the den was larger. He turned. The Duke fought back desperately. There was no chance for thrust and parry here—no chance for the light quick harassing dive of the duelist. Here it was slug and get slugged—lock, clinch, rip and tear! Mad destruction had invaded the squat badger. He was on his own sort of battlefield here—he had his enemy cornered. The Duke budged not an inch; he slammed in. There was a tangle of dog and badger—tight-locked, buried in the ground, but rolling, seething, tumbling.

Big Jim came hurrying with the shovel and a pick. There was a moment when both men listened and Fannie stopped yapping and crying. From the mouth of the den came the sound of the Duke's muffled voice, the faint snarls of the badger.

"They're still at it," said the Boss excitedly. "He's still alive."

Big Jim took the pick. The Boss threw dirt with the shovel. They hit rocks, ripped them out with their hands. They tossed away loose earth. They scooped and dug while the Boss swore fiercely. No little dog could ever hope to master a badger in his lair. It wasn't possible.

Livid fire laced the small body of the



Duke. He felt smothered. The thing he fought now was an unseen terror. They were puffing, snarling, spitting, coughing. Nightmare had come to ride away with the Duke's life. He heard the Boss shouting something, at the mouth of the tunnel. Then earth fell back of them, and the Duke and the badger were caught in caving soil. They struggled free into a section of the burrow where the walls still were intact. The Duke dived. But this could not last much longer. The frightful power that was suddenly embodied in the badger's hide,—the living torture of being cut to ribbons while still alive by claws that reached deeper than the skin and tore at muscles and tendons, —flayed and scourged the Duke.

He was going to die; but he would die facing the enemy.

He plunged. His teeth caught solid badger—a miracle! Fury sunk claws into the Duke. The dog's teeth locked. He closed his eyes. His muscles set. The badger squirmed, tried to get out of that solid hold. If he could but turn in his hide, get those vicious teeth and claws in action again, this dog would soon let loose! He twisted. The Duke crunched with every ounce of power in his jaws. He felt the badger's leverage, ponderous but invincible, begin to twist that hold until it would be pried from the Duke's mouth. Then super-dog strength flowed into the Duke's jaws. He clamped tighter. He felt rather than heard the breath of the badger whistling through a throat almost closed by the pressure.

The Duke began to feel strange weak-

ness come to him. It seemed that new strength came to his unseen antagonist.

Then came blackness—blackness filled with sifting earth, falling stones, the collapse of the hole.

The Duke's teeth set rigidly. . . .

"Easy now," commanded the Boss. "They weren't back clear to the end of this hole, by the sound. Take it easy with the pick, Jim. We might run into them any minute."

IT was the Boss who saw first the stubby tail and black spot on the Duke's rump. He leaped into the loose earth, clawed with his hands, started to pull. There was a queer rigidity about the Duke's muscles. The Boss pulled again, dropped to hands and knees and tugged.

Then the mass under the earth began to move. There was an eruption. Out came the Duke, stretched longer than usual as the Boss tugged manfully at his little legs. But at the other end of the dog was a fighting, snarling, twisting mass of badger.

Big Jim struck with the pick-handle. The badger spit, twisted, clawed. The Boss saw a shred of the Duke's mangled hide ripped clear from his scarified body. Sudden frenzy leaped into the Boss and he jumped. Brown hands clamped on the twisting badger.

Sharp claws made blood spurt from the Boss' hands. He barely noticed it. What he did see was the bleeding, ripped body of the Duke. It sent a savage desire to kill through him. With a twist the Boss wrenched the badger over. . . . Big Jim struck. The badger quivered, then lay still.

The Boss was cursing, soulfully. His big fingers, torn and bleeding, began a quick, tender probing of the Duke's hurts. He tried to get the Duke's teeth out of that desperate locked hold.

"*Gr-r-r,*" murmured the Duke, and shook his enemy feebly.

"All right, boy," said the Boss, his voice thick. "All right, let up—you've licked him."

The Duke came out of the haze that had settled on him as the earth had caved. His eyes opened; he reached to lick at the hand that touched him so tenderly.

It was all right. The Boss knew, now! And that old debt when the Duke had stood between the Boss and the killer bear was balanced. Together they had bested the lamb-killer—and the Duke would live. There were beckoning trails ahead. . . . The Duke sighed gustily.



*A remarkable story
of the Free Lances
in Diplomacy.*

By CLARENCE
HERBERT NEW

THE Marquess noticed a sudden tenseness in the figure of the man at his elbow—his old friend Earl Lammerford of St. Ives—and in a casual side glance saw that, while Lammerford's face was masklike as usual when something serious was impending, his partly veiled eyes were glowing with amazed interest and speculation; apparently he was looking across the sea of heads in the ballroom at that of a handsome girl who stood talking with one of the foreign diplomats in the opposite corner. Then Trevor heard a low voice:

"I say, George! . . . Don't let her catch you looking—but tell me who that woman is, talking with Von Stahl, over in the corner?"

"I've noticed her—but never saw her before this evening to my knowledge. One of the young ones just grown up, I fancy—they go in a bit for the Diplomatic Corps if they're on the intelligent side."

"H-m-m—about how old, would you say?"

"Oh, possibly twenty-three or -four. Prob'ly less than that."

"Notice anything out of the ord'n'ry—in her face?"

"W-e-l-l, not one person in a hundred would—but we're by way of bein' close observers. I'd say at this distance—an' I fancy it might be less noticeable close-up—that her left nostril is a trifle larger than the right one and the dimple in her chin irregular enough to be, possibly, a scar instead."

"Aye. Very good! Now—supposin' that girl's mother had been shot durin' the German War, knocking a small fragment of bone up into that nostril, and that a skillful surgeon had patched her up until the damage isn't noticeable except upon careful inspection. Would

her daughter, if she had one, inherit that scar and that enlarged nostril—if she'd been born *before* the war?"

"How the devil could she?"

"Exactly! That girl is the living, breathing image of the Baroness Greta von Hildersheim—one of the most rabid monarchists of the Verlin court—one of the most implacable haters of all prisoners from the Allied Forces—one of the clever schemers behind the most drastic decisions of the High Command. This girl would be taken for her anywhere in Germany except for her apparent age—and she has those two marks that prob'ly no other woman got in the same way durin' the war. What's the answer?"

"The Baroness would be how old—today?"

"Around fifty-eight."

"Hmph! . . . That girl, or woman, is no fifty-eight—nor the half of it!"

"Care to book a wager on that?"

"But—how the dev—"

"I fancy if we dug into her recent activities, we'd find her one of the Herr Doktor Saul Vorhalter's most successful cases—in Vienna. About three out of five show amazing rejuvenation—and the fiftieth is a holy wonder, like this. Now—point is: if I'm right,—and I'll bet on it,—what's the woman up to in London? She's here with some definite purpose which is likely to have a far-reaching effect. Question is—*what?*"

LAMMERFORD went off to find one of the Foreign Office men and make a few guarded inquiries—while the Marquess sauntered through the rooms exchanging a word or two with various acquaintances.

Armein House is a three-story double building in a block of the usual narrower London dwellings—purchased at

The Return Of the Exile

Illustrated by Austin Briggs

the end of the last century by the Dowager Lady Armein as a town-house for her son and his wife in the days when a mixture of German blood in one of the city families was no bar in a social way, and made up for being packed tight against the neighboring dwellings by having a good-sized garden at the back. In a room used as a study at the rear, the Marquess noticed three men in apparently a confidential discussion—one of whom he recognized as a former Wilhelmstrasse spy recently blossoming out as a politician of some influence. This man had once known him,—to his own very profane regret,—but not as the Marquess of Lyonesse, one of the most famous men on the globe.

Presently the group broke up and the former Wilhelmstrasse man stepped through a small door into an adjoining room which might have been the private office of Lord Armein before the war. As the man presumably had no more business in that room than any other guest, but had not reappeared after several minutes, the Marquess sauntered into the room. But there was no one there! There was but the one door through which he had just entered—one window with thick double-sashes of armor-glass—and bookcases around the walls, to a height of seven feet.

Stepping along the line of these cases, His Lordship glanced at the projecting edges of the shelving to see where the dust had been disturbed by contact with fingers. In a moment, he discovered a section projecting an inch at one side from the adjoining one. Evidently a concealed latch had failed to catch. Pulling this toward him, he found, as he had expected, that the section swung out on a steel frame and had behind it a door set flush in the wainscoting. He pulled

the shelving shut behind him, went through the door, and found himself in a rear room of what he judged to be the adjoining house on the east side.

ABOUT this house there was a death-like stillness—so noticeable that faint echoes of the orchestra in Armein House came through the wall. And with it, there came a sensation of danger. For a moment or two the Marquess stood perfectly still, listening, until he had located stealthy rustlings and footsteps in one of the overhead rooms. Suddenly a blood-curdling screech, followed by broken pleadings, echoed through the house. Translated into English, the words would have been:

"Oh, don't do that! . . . My God—not again! I'll tell—I'll tell—if you won't do that again! *Argh-h!*"

Silence—a low, distant murmur—a sobbing groan of unbearable torture—silence! By this time the Marquess' rubber-soled shoes were ascending the solidly built stair as silently as the tread of an Indian tracker. He found a room in which there was a window with a fire-escape outside and got close to the partly open window of an adjoining room in which there appeared to be two or three persons. Holding a small mirror just beyond the edge of the window-casing he saw a man on the floor, securely bound, with the Wilhelmstrasse spy bending over him, and the woman whom Lammerford had been convinced was the Baroness von Hildersheim smoking comfortably in a lounge-chair. The Marquess was dismissing his friend's theory as sheer impossibility—when the woman began to speak. What she knew about the wretch on the floor made His Lordship doubt the evidence of his senses. Finally she said:

"He's not told us everything, yet—but we've no more time to fool with him. Finish him off, Breitner! . . . Schwartz can dispose of him in the acid tank, down-cellar; that has been most useful to us upon occasion."

Incredulous horror grew in the face on the floor, and the man began to beg:

"Oh—you couldn't! Why—we've—we've worked together for years! Please, Breitner! You cannot do such a thing—when I have told you everything I know! Wait! . . . Let me think! There was the matter of the officer who thought he could swing at least a third of them over at the right moment—was it his name you wanted?"

Breitner viciously kicked the helpless man—said he would keep inventing things that he hadn't told them, for half the night—if they wasted the time upon him! He asked the Baroness if she had a capsule with her. When she handed it to him, he shoved it around back of the man's desperately clenched teeth until he could force it between the gums into his mouth; when it did go in it slipped too far down the man's throat for him to cough it out again. What followed was a matter of a rather sickening moment or two. . . . The Marquess had been upon the point of interfering—although it would have meant losing information of far more value than the fellow's life—but he hadn't anticipated the capsule-method, and the matter was finished before he could possibly have clambered into the room or even risked shooting them.

THEN the two began talking, and he listened tensely to details of a political *coup* which has been discussed in every European Chancellery for the last fourteen years, though never as anything but one of those possibilities which never happen. It now became evident, however, that the plans were almost fully matured and this meeting in London had been to get what the dead man had known of a counterplot to defeat them, and then to check up every little detail until it was fool-proof. It seemed that the Baroness, by reason of her former activities, still possessed enough influence to command a serviceable following and persuade the chief actor in the proposed *coup* to make the attempt—when nobody else among the old Junkers could induce him to head the *Putsch*.

An iron fire-escape outside of a third-

floor window isn't the sort of place one could expect to see a distinguished-looking man in evening clothes, without a top-coat, just before midnight—even though the weather was fairly warm—nor is it a comfortable resting-place for a man past middle life. But there was that being discussed inside the room which was likely to alter the map of Europe, eventually, unless the matter could be controlled by other nations.

WHEN the Marquess had grasped the main details, he managed to get downstairs silently and into Armein House without being discovered. There he found Earl Lammerford hunting the place over—wondering where he could have gone to. They went out to the Marquess' car, and he told his chauffeur to drive to Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, as quickly as possible and drop them at the block of offices occupied by the great press syndicate of which the Trevors were majority shareholders. On the way, Lammerford told him that, aside from Verlin and the other cities being in a political condition where anything might happen at a moment's notice, the Foreign Office had no definite information as to anything likely to materialize within a week or two. The Marquess thereupon gave him the details of what he had overheard. In Red Lion Court, they went directly to the private office of Harley Greaves, managing director of the great syndicate, knowing that he seldom left the building before one in the morning.

After glancing up to see who might be coming into his office unannounced, Greaves banged a fist upon his desk.

"My word! . . . I'd have wagered a hundred quid that you'd turn up before morning, My Lord Marquess—or that you'd telephone me! How you do it I don't know—but just so sure as something most unexpected breaks, we hear from you with advance information!"

"Then—things really are moving in Verlin?"

"Oh, not yet—but every 'political' over there is on edge—trying to feel out public opinion an' see how far he dares go! Our men say in code, over the telephone, that the Prince may be elected President within a week or two—and declared Emperor within six months! Way down deep, the whole country is monarchist at heart—they aren't built to govern themselves in a republic."



"That girl . . . one of the clever schemers behind decisions of the High Command," said Lammerford.

"Any sentiment in favor of bringing back the Exile himself?"

Greaves looked up in a startled way—then filled and lighted his pipe, and took a few nervous puffs.

"Now—how does Your Lordship happen to ask *that* question? The subject is not even mentioned in Verlin, save under conditions of the utmost secrecy—and I've been doubting whether anybody considers such an eventuality seriously; there are far too many considerations against it. On the other hand, if it were engineered to explode at exactly the psychological moment, I—don't know! The man always has hypnotized and dominated the country. The Parlam'nt is sitting every night—half the

night at least, and sometimes until morning—"

"Well, on Sunday evening it will be moved in the Parliam'nt to nominate the Prince to succeed Paulenberg as President when he resigns in a few weeks, and call a general election for ratification. The moment that is moved, another faction will be on their feet demanding the return of the Exile himself—and matters are pretty well set with a following in the other factions to carry the nomination through with a rush. At just the right moment, if the thing seems likely to go through, the big velvet curtains concealing the door of the little retiring-room at the side of the rostrum will be drawn aside and the man himself will step through—in the old uniform. They figure that will settle it. —Ever hear of the Baroness Greta von Hildersheim?"

"You mean the woman more or less responsible for the butchery of Allied prisoners during the war? An implacable monarchist—who was shot by the French Secret Service when they caught her over the line in Alsace?"

"That's the woman—but she wasn't shot. Been in Vienna—looks about twenty-four, today. It was she who sold the idea to the Exile. Those years in the Nederlands had taught him some of the sense he never had before, and when he passed seventy he definitely gave up all idea of being called back to the throne—felt the job might possibly be too much for him. But the woman pointed out that his wisdom had increased with years—that even with a slowly failing body his mind and judgment were more valuable than ever to the nation. He doubted that any appreciable number of the people would see it that way, but she showed him lists of names—the old Junkers and the immense following they still have, with the feeling that he, at his age, would be safer at the head of the Governm'nt than the Prince, who is still more or less headstrong and intolerant of opposition. Presently she had him convinced. A dozen of the old lot have come to Goorn for interviews with him—plans have been blocked out to the last detail—passports obtained for a party of motor-tourists going through from Amsterdam to Verlin, Dresden, Vienna, Hungary, to Stamboul. Three different houses have been temporarily leased for use as rendezvous according to the circumst'nces of the moment.

"So that's the proposition, Harley. I'd say it has a fifty-fifty chance of going through—Lammerford puts it rather better than that, with any sort of luck on their side. Do we want him seated again—or don't we?"

"We—do—not! The idea of a Pan-Teutonic world permeates his mind as thoroughly today as it ever did—an' while I fancy added wisdom would make him lay his plans for his successors rather than himself, yet you may wager the plans would be laid! He never has for one second expressed penitence or regret for what he did. Question is—if the people fall for the proposition, and fetch him back, how can we possibly prevent it without another war?"

"That's what Lammerford an' I have been figuring out as we came here. It can be done—somehow. For one thing, we mean to have a frank and plain talk with the man himself, whom we've both met a number of times. He was under obligations to us for his life upon two occasions—"

"Even so—you'll not produce the slightest impression upon him. Dashed if I can see what argum'nts you could use—simply a waste of time, and humiliation for you! He'll not even grant an interview!"

WELL, we'll see how things look at Goorn, anyhow," said Trevor. "Now—the Teutonic sheets in our syndicate know nothing of our financial int'rest in it. Question is—will the editors obey without question any orders I personally give 'em if you phone in code that there are weighty reasons why I'm representing you an' the syndicate—as a person least likely to be suspected of any such influence?"

"They may phone me before carrying out your orders, but they'll be told that their sheets will suspend publication within an hour if they don't—and there isn't a German on any of the editorial staffs. How were Your Lordships proposing to use them?"

"Can't tell until we're on the ground—in touch with your most confidential men an' those from the Foreign Office. I've a notion we can smash the Exile's chances, anyhow—quite possibly the Prince's as well. And a lot of extras on the streets at just the right moment may carry a lot of weight. The public doesn't really enjoy being tricked and exploited."

"Frankly, gentlemen—I don't like the

idea of you two bein' in Verlin during the next month, or until after whatever elections they decide upon. They were usin' machine-guns there ten days ago—both sides—the police an' the mobs. An' well—d'ye see—machine-guns are no respecters of persons. Your lives are far too valuable to the world to be wiped out in a silly mess like that! Why not leave it to the F. O. men and us? What?"

"Can you be sure of blocking this scheme? Once it goes through you can't stop it without war. Point is, Lammerford an' I prob'lly *can* stop it—even at some personal risk. Seems worth trying, if you ask me."

NEXT day, one of the big Trevor planes, armed with passports good for any part of Europe, came down at the flying-field on the outskirts of Goorn and a handsome car, placed at their disposal by the burgomaster, took them to pay a courtesy-call upon him during which they jokingly asked what he would do if he unexpectedly found that the eminent guest forced upon him as a resident for many years had suddenly disappeared between two days.

Van Stuyven laughed until his fat sides shook.

"Um *Gottes Willen*, let him go! I should turn over in bed and sleep on the other side!"

"Even at the risk of being used as Belgium was—in the next war?"

"Oh—ja! There are millions of Belgians still living—under their own king, mind you. Joking aside, My Lord Marquess—we know something here about the underlying feeling in Verlin and we do not believe this man at least ever will be in position to prepare another war. The Prince—ja, possibly; but he has more sense than you English think—he would not do it. *This* man is no longer the War Lord of sixteen years ago. His mind is clear—but he does not ride as far or chop as much wood as he did. But go you and see him—if you can. I will make the little wager, if you like, that he will not receive you. It pleases him still to exercise the smaller royal privileges."

The small estate when they came to it was surrounded by a high brick wall. Inside this enclosure, the rambling house of brick and stucco nestled among hedges and shrubbery at the end of a grove of trees—and was much larger than might have been supposed from a casual

glance which would not take in outlying wings at the back and sides. The lodge-keeper had admitted them without question after a glance at their cards and the burgomaster's car—but at the portecochère they were taken in charge by a butler who placed them in a large sunny

fully misused, almost unlimited power—now plotting, as they knew, to regain a large portion of that power. Inferentially, they were guests in his house—calling with the object of urging him to abandon a course which had only possible chances for success at the best, and which might easily result in his death. And he was refusing to see them. On the other hand, they had a duty to the whole civilized world in making his plans abortive—if they could. So they stepped down into the conservatory and walked silently along, examining the blooms, until they came to a bed in



"Still dreaming of wielding the power he once had, though deep down he realizes he is a doddering old man."

room with a conservatory along one side, and brought in wine and cakes and tobacco. He was of the opinion that if the "Highness" received them at all it would not be for an hour or two, inasmuch as he was exceedingly busy with correspondence and other personal matters. But if the Lords of Lyonesse and St. Ives could amuse themselves—and would ring if anything was desired—

In the dead silence of the room after the man had gone out, they became conscious of a murmur of voices somewhere near. At a snap guess, Lammerford was of the opinion that the Exile's private suite was on the other side of the wall. He was known to have a hobby for horticulture—and the conservatory, with a door communicating with his own suite, had been featured in the newspapers. This probability brought up the question as to when a person may cease to be a gentleman in the interests of public welfare. Here was a former personage—who had possessed, and fright-

which a large clump of palmetto shielded them from the observation of anyone who might glance through the open door of a large living-room where two men were discussing a question of clothes, while occasionally moving about so that the observers could see them distinctly. The Englishmen drew from their pockets small but very powerful microphones attached to pocket batteries, and placed the receivers against the conservatory glass which was vibrating with the murmur of voices. With these microphones, the listeners could hear even whispers inside the living-room. After a moment's silence, there came the question:

"Who did you say these callers are, Schmaltz?"

"The cards are at your elbow, Highness. The Right Honorable the Marquess of Lyonesse, and Earl Lammerford of Saint Ives."

"Ah—yes. I recall them for many years—suspicions that were had of them in Wilhelmstrasse—the *verdammte Englisches!* We will let them cool their heels in there for a few hours and then say I am not receiving, today. (*Gott!* If they but knew what matters are occupying the whole of my attention this week!) Now—in the matter of the uniform I should wear as I appear through the curtains of the little anteroom—the little room that I myself had constructed for just such a purpose when it was advisable that I appear before the Parliament. It was a picture in one of the American gazettes which gave me the idea—a surrogate's court, with an immense drape of dark velvet on the wall back of the Judge's chair. He entered court through a little door behind it, parting the curtains as he stepped through. Most effective! You think I should wear the white cuirassier's uniform with the silver helmet and gold eagle—patent-leather jack-boots—the straight sword with the gold knucklebow and silver scabbard—like the big portrait which formerly hung in the *Schloss?*"

"It was the Imperial uniform of the old days, Highness—when you were the 'All Highest'—"

SCHMALTZ—you forget yourself! What, then, am I today?" The man's tone was curt.

"An exile, Highness—considering a journey into a republic which represents a different world from that of sixteen years ago. Monarchies are now out of date. What you may be next week—who knows? Perhaps the 'All Highest' again—or perhaps a fugitive—perhaps a corpse."

"Schmaltz, you—er—haven't noticed any suggestion of a stoop about the shoulders, I trust? I still have the military bearing—*ja?*"

"Almost, Highness; sufficiently for the situation, I think. One does not expect in seventy-four the resiliency of forty or fifty. When you ride, however, I would suggest a covered stirrup. If a metal stirrup should catch around the instep you might be fatigued enough to slip off, and be dragged. You should remember also, Highness, not to stand too long—it uses up vitality."

"How many years have you been my valet, Schmaltz?"

"Upward of forty, Highness."

"In the old days, when we had disci-

pline, and you were in the Army, I struck you to the ground repeatedly for clumsiness or some other fault. You have improved!"

"But not from such 'discipline,' as you call it, Highness. That has gone out. I'm here now only because I know your needs better than anyone else. When you die—"

"When I die—eh? You think it will be soon?"

"One year—five years—who knows? Seventy-four is not youth, Highness; which is why I say you are unwise to attempt this *Putsch.*"

"You think this beard— Eh? It must come off, of course?"

"Ja—for a time. A beard will grow again—but the portrait as you step from behind the curtain must be the one best remembered—the mustaches upturned, and the underlip— You'll not forget the underlip, Highness—the Holstengollern underlip."

The watchers in the conservatory saw the valet go out of the room and the Exile step over to examine a large assortment of uniforms which had been piled, neatly enough, upon a long divan—but which had been hanging in folds and creases too many years. With a tunic draped over one arm he held it to the light and studied the garment. Then he called sharply:

"Schmaltz!"

"Herein, Highness!"

"Attention! These uniforms have a shabby look!"

"They have been brushed and aired every four months for fourteen years, Highness. Old cloth is not the same as new cloth."

"Then—you would leave these here to be sent for, later? Ja?"

"Nein, Highness—I would have them all burned. If you are successful, it will be a simple matter to order new ones. If not—you will not care to see these again."

THÉ next time the valet left the room, the Exile adjusted the cheval-glass in one corner so that it commanded the longest line of approach obtainable, and from the diagonally opposite corner began advancing toward it, standing as erectly as he could manage—his left hand upon an imaginary sword-hilt and fingers of the right twisting the upturned points of his mustache—the underlip protruding—the forehead puckered in the famous Holstengollern scowl. The



first time, he managed to maintain the pose as far as the glass, but on the second effort, his back hurt until it forced him to stoop a little. The protruding underlip trembled until he couldn't hold it in the old arrogant position. The observers behind the big palmetto, watching their chance, slipped back to the drawing-room where the butler had parked them.

"Gad!" said the Marquess fervently. "That was a bit sickening, Lammy! I shouldn't care to watch much more of it! There is a man with the blood of twenty millions upon his soul, but apparently without the slightest admission of blood-guiltiness—still dreaming of wielding again the power he once had, though realizing deep down that he is a doddering old man of seventy-four. Perhaps getting a taste in that way of the punishment no heavenly or earthly power ever could mete out to him. He'll not see us—fancy we'd best go now. We should be in Verlin ahead of him—knowing as we do every detail of the plans. The Baroness comes here tonight."

A few hours later the big Trevor plane came down at the flying-field in the southern suburbs of Verlin. The official in charge, after examining the passports, assured the Marquess that he would be privileged to leave again at any hour of the day or night that suited his convenience. From the flying-field, Trevor and Lammerford were driven directly to the offices of the Verliner *Tageblatt* on Friedrichstrasse, where their cards promptly procured a private interview

Waiting for the door to open and the Chamber to proclaim him Emperor. But the door didn't open.

with Herr Wilhelm Mannheim, the editor-in-chief—otherwise, the Honorable William Manning of London and Hants.

"It's a pleasure to chat with Your Lordships at any time—but I'll confess I'm a bit fogged over certain instructions from the syndicate, of which our sheet is a member, to carry out implicitly any suggestions you may make to us. Let me see if I can't put it a bit comprehensively: You gentlemen are statesmen—former Cabinet Ministers, and Privy Councilors—but not newspaper men. An' that, d'ye see, would make you ignorant of considerations which might influence the actions of a news-sheet regardless of any political conditions. Suppose you outline what it is you wish us to do—and let me consider whether we can do it."

"No, Manning. Not a word until you agree to carry out instructions on the jump. The situation is much too serious even to consider any other course. Pick up your telephone there—broadcast from your own transmitter a call to Harley Greaves in London on twenty-eight hundred meters. Tell him what you've just said—and what I said."

MANNING didn't exactly relish doing this, either—it seemed too much interference with the business liberty of an independent newspaper. But after a moment's reflection he put through the call, getting an acknowledgment from the syndicate manager in four minutes. Then followed what started to be heated argument, but subsided into amazed compliance.

"I don't know where or how Your Lordship gets any such influence as you seem to have! Greaves says we carry out your orders to the letter without argum'nt—or suspend publication within two hours! Of course he couldn't do anything like that—the owners of the sheet would have a lot to say—but—"

"Greaves represents your owners directly, Manning—he knows exactly what he's talking about. Test it out if you like—but I hope you won't, because we're wasting time and there's none too much of that, anyhow. All set? Very good! Now, what do you and your men know about a possible *coup* to declare the Prince head of the Republic on Sunday night, in Parliam'nt—an' declare him Emperor when he takes office after Paulenberg's resignation and retirement?"

"Oh, such a thing is possible, of

course! The proposition keeps cropping out whenever there is a political upheaval. His party is a strong one—stronger than the outside Govern'mnts imagine. With the Nationalists alone, they could win. The move would be increasingly popular if the Prince formed a Govern'mt with any common-sense plan for relieving present conditions. But we press-men rather doubt if anything like that goes through. A more serious revolution seems likely."

"Did you ever see the Baroness Greta von Hildersheim?" Trevor asked.

"A very handsome woman, but absolutely cold-blooded—one of the most dangerous in the country because of the influence she had with the High Command and the Junkers. Shot in Alsace by French Secret Service."

"Shot, possibly—but not fatally. She's living today—apparently has been a patient of Doktor Saul Vorhalter in Vienna. She's about fifty-eight, but she looks twenty-five. Ever hear of Adolf Breitner?"

"Former Wilhelmstrasse operative before the war—underground 'political' today, with a rather amazin' amount of influence, one way or another."

"Aye! Well, if he an' the Baroness Greta—who now seems to be a beautiful girl of twenty-five—combined forces for a *Putsch* in favor of the Prince or of someone else—how far would they get with it?"

"My word! Pretty strong combination, Marquess! If they made a deal with one of the larger political parties in Parliam'nt they might easily win out on it! Who else might they favor?"

"How about the Exile himself?"

"H-m-m—he'd not do it. Proposition has been put up to him, but he's not havin' any—"'

"As it happens—he *is*. She talked him over—we fancy that she an' Breitner have a pretty serious following. They're fetching the man here before daylight, tomorrow—have temporarily rented three houses as possible rendezvous in different parts of the city. The plan is to have Schmerling nominate the Prince, in Parliam'nt, Sunday night, an' call for a vote by acclamation—then have Breitner on his feet, recognized by the Chancellor, proposing the Exile himself instead of his son, and suddenly produce him on the rostrum—figuring upon carrying the Parliam'nt by storm at a psychological moment."

"Oh, I say! My word! . . . They'll come dev'lsh close to doing it! Er—one infers that Your Lordships have some scheme for handling such an occurrence if it materializes. What?"

"Aye—but unless it's timed exactly right it's likely to sweep the man onto the throne instead of off it! I want you to have set up in three-column plate with page-width heads—and several thousand copies run off—an extra detailing the whole plot of the Baroness and Breitner—persuading the man to come here—the fact that he is actually in the building, ready to step out upon the rostrum and trick them into proclaiming him Emperor whether they really want him back or not. *Then hold those extras until you get word from us.* At the first word, you get them cried by the newsboys on the streets. At the second word, several of the boys sneak in behind the rear desks in Parliam'nt an' get the extras into the hands of two hundred deputies, if possible. Mustn't mention the Prince in any way or the proposition for Schmerling to nominate him first—if you do, you may have the Prince swept in as a boomerang. Concentrate upon the older man—ridicule the idea of his being fit to govern at seventy-four—describe how a man feels at that age. Point out the fact that Paulenberg is exceptional in ability. You catch the necessity of timing your extras exactly right, Manning? And now we shall want you to loan us the four best men you have."

THE editor bowed. "I apologize for a remark I made when you gentlemen came in. You're not only a statesman, Marquess—but by gad, you're a newspaperman, as well! That extra as you've outlined it is not only a whale of a scoop but it's a political stroke that a news-sheet rarely has the chance to spring! You've beaten us, hands down, on getting that information, too—one doesn't see how you manage it! Yes, we've four men I fancy you'll like—they'll report in an hour or so, anywhere you say. It'll be supposed that they're interviewing you as celebrities—famous aviators—for the *Tageblatt*—an' they'll know the place is safe before they confer with you."

"Here are the three addresses the Baroness picked as rendezvous—this party will be at one or the other of them for breakfast. With your facilities, Manning, you should be able to manage a

room in one of the adjoining houses so that we can go there with your four men—or divide ourselves into three couples—and arrange to see or hear, through the walls, whatever goes on. And we also want to study tonight the builders' plans of the Parliam'nt Buildings. Got it?"

BY three in the morning the reporters and the two noblemen had managed to get a comprehensive idea of the lay-out in the houses—two of which they explored from the scuttles, down—the other, from the fire-escape and a rear window. One of them was occupied by a man and three women—evidently selected for the first and possibly only rendezvous. Peep-holes were cut through the walls of a dining-room, and of the living-room next to it—in places not likely to be noticed by men and women having a good deal of serious plotting on their minds. Later in the afternoon, two of the *Tageblatt* men came to the Adlon with further information they had picked up by mere chance.

"There's something else brewing, Marquess—a lot of the leaders in the Prince's party are having conferences, one place or another. He's not in town himself, but is at one of his castles not more than thirty miles from here—could make it in less than an hour, any time. I doubt if they are ready to start anything by tomorrow night—but they might seize the opportunity if it looked unusually favorable."

Next morning, a car drove up in front of the house in Vogelgass with the Exile, the Baroness, Schmaltz and Breitner. By noon, a dozen of the Junkers had drifted in, one at a time, and the watchers on the other side of the wall saw them sitting down for a meal at a long table in the dining-room—the pocket microphones enabling the observers to catch every word that was spoken. It was evident that the Baroness dominated the party with her personality and organizing ability. One after another obstacle was submitted to her, and overcome. Sensing in the Exile an obstinate impression that he was not getting the respect due his birth and probable return to the throne, she tactfully settled the point to the satisfaction of everybody.

"Look you, men—for the moment, we are but conspirators, all of us, trying to restore the All Highest to the throne—and we are not considering rank or

birth. But when we are successful, our guest here becomes a greater one than any of us—as he was before. He must then be treated with the homage and deference due him."

At this, champagne glasses were lifted—a muttered "*Hoch!*" ran around the table—and the All Highest nodded, condescendingly. This was indeed more as it should be!

NEXT day was Sunday. In the afternoon, after a study of the builders' tracings, the two Englishmen went to the Parliament Buildings, mixing with deputies who were arriving for the all-night session and drifting along the various corridors on that floor, glancing into several of the committee- and conference-rooms. In the days of the Empire they would have been stopped and turned back by one official or another at every turn in the corridor—but under the Republic, the deputies had the run of the building, going wherever they pleased. The Englishmen therefore were able finally to discover the narrow side-passage leading to the little anteroom off the rostrum of the chamber. From this blind passage a short branch forked off from a double turn to what seemed to be a disused store-room with a telephone in it. Trevor chanced a call to Manning in the *Tageblatt* office—and learned that the wire had previously been disconnected for a year or more, but that Manning had used political influence to have it privately connected with his sheet on the ground that it was a leading Government mouthpiece and he needed such facilities for reporting proceedings in the chamber. This happened to be exactly what Trevor needed badly.

Shortly after eight o'clock, the two were in that little storeroom—their faces and clothes sufficiently changed to prevent recognition by anyone in Verlin who knew them. The Exile wasn't due in the anteroom before ten—but as the chamber was filling up rather early, the Baroness might decide at any moment to fetch and leave him there. Schmaltz was to be waiting in the rear of the chamber. At a signal from Breitner, he was to run around through the blind passage into the anteroom, unlock the door and hold the velvet curtains back for the Exile to appear. There was to be nobody anywhere near the blind passage while he was in the anteroom—and one of the Junkers would have switched the two Englishmen off on another corridor

had they not smilingly told him in flawless Prussian that they had offered themselves as a special guard in the little passage itself, where nobody could get by them to the All Highest. They were so conversant with every detail of the plot that the Junker was quite unsuspicious.

At nine-thirty, the Exile and Schmaltz came through the passage, His Highness in a long cloak of civilian cut—with a gray felt hat, striped trousers and tan shoes. Trevor and Lammerford had dodged into the storeroom until they got by. Once in the room, Schmaltz took from the suitcase he was carrying the white uniform which he had suggested—the patent-leather jack-boots—the silver helmet with the gold eagle—and rapidly got his master into them. The Exile had been carrying his sword under the cloak. As there were two large armchairs and a table in the room, Schmaltz told his master to sit down at once—get all the rest he could during what might prove a tedious wait, inasmuch as nobody would be permitted to enter the little anteroom until he stepped out through the curtains—and cautioned him not to attempt peering through them. The slightest movement might cause premature discovery of who was behind them.

As Schmaltz disappeared down the passage, the Englishmen stole along to where, from the dark shadows in it, they could watch the Exile seated in his chair by the table. What the man's thoughts were, nobody could have guessed with any certainty. He had been practicing on the protruding Holstengollern underlip and the Holstengollern frowned until he could hold them longer than at first—but it was still too much of an effort to keep up indefinitely. The stiffening old lips would presently begin to tremble until he had to relax them—and then his cheeks sagged as he never had seen them sag during the years that the now missing beard had covered them. The pain in his back when he stood stiffly erect bothered him; he took a few turns up and down the room but simply couldn't keep jacked up to the perpendicular—it hurt too much. At seventy-four one notices little infirmities never before suspected.

THE man kept looking at his watch. Why couldn't they get on with it if they were going to? He wondered if there could have been a hitch anywhere. No

—from what the Baroness had said, that would be unlikely. The demand unquestionably was a real one—from subjects who had loved him. But why were they delaying? He was already tired—his body ached with the tightness and weight of the heavy uniform, stiff with years of disuse. The Marquess also had been looking at his watch—and now hurried out into the back part of the chamber. Schmerling was conferring with some of the Prince's party—would probably move his nomination in a few minutes. Hurrying back to the storeroom, Trevor got Manning on the phone and told him to put the extras on the street at once—get them into the chamber in not over fifteen minutes. Then he went back to see what happened.

Breitner was over among the Socialist desks, and Schmaltz near one of the doors behind him. Schmerling moved the Prince's nomination for President—and there were a number of "*Hochs!*" from various parts of the room. Evidently the proposition was not displeasing to a good many. But Breitner was on his feet, waiting to be recognized, when there was a loud echo of cries from newsboys in the square and streets—evidently an extra of some rather serious nature. In a moment some of the newsboys sneaked in through the doors and, exhibiting the glaring front pages, had no trouble in disposing of a hundred copies before the officials came running to turn them out. Several of the deputies broke for the corridors to obtain copies for themselves. There was a three-column half-tone of the All Highest in the familiar uniform, and screaming headlines proclaimed:

THE EXILE RETURNS

NOW ACTUALLY HERE IN THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS. PLOT OF THE BARONESS GRETA VON HILDERSHEIM AND ADOLF BREITNER THIS MOMENT UNCOVERED!

DEPUTIES—ATTENTION!

Do we want this old man back again—as a tool of this woman? Have we nothing but the Holstengollerns available to head our Republic?

AS the two or three hundred deputies with the extras began to grasp the significance of what they read, there was a muttering undercurrent which swelled into a roar of angry protest.

Breitner managed to get out of the chamber, and hid himself in the buildings. Schmaltz ran around through the corridors and blind passage to the little anteroom where the Exile had been pacing up and down in growing impatience. The moment approached of which he had dreamed through fourteen long tedious years while he had been marking time—the moment when, with the theatrical pose so dear to him, he would step out before his former subjects and be again acclaimed Emperor! When he heard the roar in the chamber he misunderstood it and took his stand close to the little door behind the velvet curtains. Left hand on sword-hilt—right hand twisting the aspiring mustaches—standing erect until his back nearly broke—waiting. Waiting for the door to open—and the Chamber to acclaim him Emperor.

But the door didn't open. Instead Schmaltz rushed in, grabbed the silver helmet from his head and tossed it on the table—unfastened the tunic and white breeches—forced him down into a chair and pulled off the patent-leather jack-boots. Then he feverishly opened the suitcase and took out the clothes in which the man had arrived.

"If Highness would please hurry! The *Putsch* has failed! It is death or prison for the Highness unless we are out of the buildings in ten minutes—and what we are to do then I don't know—I—"

On the table were found a silver helmet with a golden eagle, and a silver-mounted sword.



Two men appeared at the entrance to the blind passage—the Marquess of Lyonsse and Earl Lammerford of St. Ives.

"Your Highness—if you and Schmaltz will follow us closely, we have a car in the street at the back of the buildings—prob'ly nobody will be in those corridors at the moment. We have a large plane at the Lufthansa 'drome and can set you down in Goorn within three hours. You've no time to consider, an' I fancy no choice—if life and liberty are worth anything. Well?"

THE Exile bowed and followed them without a word—a bent old figure in a long cloak and Homburg hat. His servant came stumbling after.

As the car drove swiftly away from the Reichsplatz, it seemed as though the whole population in that part of the city had come out into the streets, shouting for the immediate arrest of the Exile. Men with automatics in their hands fired upon others known to be monarchists in sympathy. An expensive car came speeding toward the Parliament Buildings along Gartenstrasse—and one of the persons inside was recognized. A fusillade of shots rang out. The chauffeur pitched sideways upon the asphalt as he shut off the gas. The woman they pulled out from the tonneau lay upon the sidewalk, still handsome in death—her life-blood flowing from the bullet-holes in her rejuvenated body. Nobody ever knew who fired the shots which ended the long life of Greta von Hildersheim.

At the flying-field the passports of the Exile and Schmaltz—under assumed names—were sufficiently regular to permit of their leaving on the Marquess' plane as members of his party—the plane having been cleared when he arrived. Three hours later two unknown men left the plane at Goorn and in a car obtained with some difficulty were driven to the little estate which had been the Exile's home for fourteen years. What bitterness there has been since in the man's reflections is a matter for conjecture.

Meanwhile in Verlin some one in the chamber recalled the little anteroom from which the All Highest used to appear through the curtains on the rostrum, and the door was forced open. On the table in the room were found a white cuirassier's uniform, patent-leather jack-boots, a silver helmet with a golden eagle, and a silver-mounted sword with a gold knuckle-bow—mute relics of a day now gone forever.

Illustrated by Henry Thiede



Mr. Pinfeather

*The joyous story of a worm
that turned—violently. . . . By
the author of "Half a Horse."*

AT two o'clock Friday afternoon, Mr. Timothy Pinfeather, chief clerk of the Boonshaft Redi-Bilt Bungalow Corporation, answered the buzzer calling him to the president's office.

Timidly opening the door, Pinfeather looked inquiringly at Lucifer Boonshaft, president of the company.

"The plans for our new bungalow, Pinfeather," requested the president.

"They have just been completed, sir," Pinfeather ventured.

"Fetch 'em," ordered Boonshaft, with an impatient gesture.

Pinfeather scurried away, returning shortly with a roll of blueprints. He laid them gently on the president's desk and vanished from view.

At two minutes after two o'clock, Mr. Pinfeather's buzzer broke into renewed humming; this time it was an incessant and insistent sound. With the nervous



Pioneers

By M. BOWMAN
HOWELL

leap of an arctic fox, Pinfeather started for the president's office.

"Did you ring, sir?" he asked, slipping in through the door.

A transformed Boonshaft faced Pinfeather, a Boonshaft who struck sheer terror to the heart of the rabbit-nerved clerk.

A few minutes before, Boonshaft had looked like a contented bull elephant. He now resembled an angry walrus on an ice-floe. The drooping ends of his tusk-like mustache quivered from suppressed rage. His blubbery sub-diaphragm was taut with emotion.

"What," he roared, pointing at the blueprints on his desk, "is the meaning of this nonsense?"

"Yes, sir," quavered Pinfeather.

"Don't gibber at me; answer my question, Pinfeather!"

"Did you say *nonsense*, sir?" Pinfeather snuffed.

"Stuff and nonsense!"

"Yes, sir."

"Pinfeather, have you seen these plans?"

"No, sir."

"The kitchen, Pinfeather, is on the roof."

"Did you say 'on the *roof*', sir?"

"And the back door faces the street!" bellowed Boonshaft with righteous indignation.

Mr. Pinfeather looked horrified. "Perhaps," he suggested hopefully, "you have the plans downside up—er—I mean, inside out—that is—you see, I mean upside down."

"Pinfeather, you're an idiot."

"Yes, sir."

BOONSHAFT scowled at the offending roll of drawings on his desk. Pinfeather fidgeted, meanwhile glancing wistfully and wishfully in the direction of the door.

"Quit squirming, Pinfeather!"

"Yes, sir."

"And call Faxe." Faxe was the head of the research and engineering department.

Pinfeather fled.

A few minutes later, he returned in the wake of Thaddeus Faxe. The latter blinked owlishly across the room from behind his gold-rimmed spectacles. He was a small but determined-looking man; his brow gave him a top-heavy appearance. "Brain, with body equipment optional," was the way Boonshaft described him.

"Well!" said Boonshaft in hollow tones. He was somewhat in awe of his chief engineer.

"Quite," answered Faxe.

"About these blueprints," blurted Boonshaft. "The kitchen, Faxe, is on the roof!"

"It's the onions," said Faxe.

"The onions?"

"—and the cauliflower."

"The cauliflower?" echoed Boonshaft, in bewilderment.

"Efficiency," explained Faxe. "Kitchen and dining-room on the roof—odors to the four winds—pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut—guests same evening."

"Howzzat?" asked Boonshaft.

"Efficiency," repeated Faxe. "New model. Your idea. . . . Boonshaft pioneers again."

"Ah," said Boonshaft. "My idea." He frowned a silent reproach at Pinfeather for not having brought this fact to his



"What's goin' on here?" the patrolman suddenly demanded out of the darkness. Pinfeather found his voice. "Why, we're trying to get in, sir."

attention, then turned back interestedly to Faxe.

"Now, about this back door facing the street—"

"Servants' entrance. . . . No running about the house—hucksters shout direct at kitchen window. . . . Efficiency."

Boonshaft eyed the plans with growing interest. On his countenance the wrathful walrus and bland bull elephant struggled for supremacy.

"Folding garbage chutes—direct to wagon," Faxe went on, pointing out this fascinating feature.

Faced with the subject of folding garbage chutes, the walrus gave up the struggle; it could no longer carry on in the face of such terrific odds.

"What other gadgets have been incorporated into this model?" asked the bull elephant, poking his proboscis into the plans.

A fanatical gleam entered the eye of Thaddeus Faxe. Taking his cue, he plunged into a mass of detail. The walls of the house would be all metal—steel plate, separated by insulation. Cut to size and shape at the factory, they could be hung on the steel framework of the building in less than a day.

Bathrooms would be sold and installed as a single unit. Models would be displayed at the company's offices. The customer could choose the bathroom desired and have it installed the same day. Bathrooms could be changed yearly or even weekly, just like automobiles and underwear.

"We might," suggested Boonshaft, "give trade-in allowances on used bathrooms."

The combination lock, Faxe went on, would replace the elusive door-key. It would do for doors what blinds had done for windows. It would probably cut the premium in half on insurance against the loss of one eye.

"Where are the famous Boonshaft Twin Beds?" asked Boonshaft, carefully scanning the plans.

FAXE pointed out the extra-large double. "Efficiency!" he bragged. "This model—special design—for newly married couples."

"What would be the unit-cost on this model?"

"Three thousand dollars. Mass production. . . . Distribution. . . . House-a-block plan."

"We might," mused Boonshaft, "sell hundreds."

"Thousands," Faxe burst.

"It'd be an awful shock to the conservatives of the Factri-Cut Homes people," Boonshaft declared. "Maybe it would jolt their president, Malone, out of some of that conceit of his."

"It'd give Factri-Cut something to think about, all right."

"And the Boonshaft Corporation could boast another pioneering achievement." The president's face glowed with enthusiasm.

"Our corporation," said Faxe, "takes pride in pioneering."

"Since eighteen fifty-two," affirmed Pinfeather, mentioning the date of the founding of the company.

Boonshaft dismissed the two men with a wave of his hand.

"I'll sleep on this idea," he said.

Which he did—at his desk—the rest of the afternoon.

LIKE many another little man who is meek-mannered and stoop-shouldered, Pinfeather was a fight fan. Consequently, Saturday morning found him still enjoying Friday night's bouts. In the privacy of his office, he was attempting to reproduce the left to the jaw that Kid Poncho had used in felling Kid Pancho for a K. O. count in the third round of the semi-windup.

Weaving and bobbing, Pinfeather executed two straight left jabs. He followed this with several vicious right and left hooks into the non-resisting air. His slight figure quivered with excitement. His *pince-nez* was very much askew.

"Take that—and that—and that!" he muttered, emphasizing the words with crushing blows to a strictly imaginary abdomen.

One of the blows accidentally connected with Pinfeather's ledger, and it crashed to the floor. Pinfeather followed up his advantage. He stood over the book with doubled fists, and glowered down at it. A brilliant purple froth on his lips—Pinfeather had chewed an indelible pencil to shreds in his excitement—gave his grim smile a barbaric appearance.

"Get up and fight!" he snarled, kicking the book in the binding.

But the fallen foe evidently believed in the Gandhi policy of passive resistance. This seemed only to enrage Pinfeather further. He sneered a sneer of contempt, and drew his foot back for

another kick. At this moment Boonshaft entered the room.

FOR a fraction of a second, Pinfeather's blood congealed in his veins. Then, as his mind adjusted itself to this emergency, he began skipping an imaginary rope, meanwhile looking with trepidation in the direction of Boonshaft.

"Heh! Heh!" he cackled idiotically. "Setting-up exercises! Ha! Ha! One must keep fit, you know."

But Boonshaft had not noticed his clerk. He was far too interested in Buzzbrain's editorial in the morning paper. It was filling him with optimism and a number of second-hand ideas.

Pinfeather took advantage of this opportunity to pick up the ledger. Hurriedly he swiped at the purple froth on his lips. He was, in fact, almost presentable by the time that Boonshaft spoke to him.

"Ho!" Boonshaft finally boomed.

"Good morning, sir."

"Pinfeather," said the president, "I've been thinking about Faxe's new bungalow, and I've decided to give it a trial. Faxe says that in three weeks he can turn out an exhibition model for public display and inspection."

"Such enterprise," marveled Timothy Pinfeather.

"This model," continued Boonshaft, "must be erected in one of the better residential districts. Furthermore, it must be built on a well-traveled thoroughfare." Here Boonshaft came to the point. "Faxe tells me you have a lot on Pico Boulevard near Sox Hills Studios."

"Well, sir, that's true." Pinfeather coughed nervously. "But I hadn't intended selling it."

"Pinfeather," said Boonshaft magnanimously, "I am here not to buy, nor to sell." He placed his hand benevolently on the shoulder of his employee. "I am here to give away the first of the new Boonshaft Fourth Dimension Bungalows."

A look of stark horror flashed across Pinfeather's face. His modest tastes had long ago envisioned a fittingly modest home for that lot. And now his rose-covered cottage was being threatened by the ogre of gross commercialism. In his mind's eye, he almost instantly pictured himself living in a Fourth Dimension Bungalow. He did not like the picture. It gave him a feeling of revulsion and nausea.

Boonshaft noted the facial contortions of his meek-mannered clerk. He was deeply touched. He patted Pinfeather on the shoulder.

"There, there, Pinfeather, don't let's get emotional about this thing. The company is happy to remember your years of faithful service by this slight token of esteem."

PINFEATHER gulped—gasped. He swayed; he clutched handfuls of air. The expression on his face was that of a man chewing up a spoonful of quinine. A weak moan broke from between his lips.

"In return," continued Boonshaft, unaware of the emotional crisis Pinfeather was going through, "the company only asks that you keep the house open to public inspection during the first sixty or ninety days of occupancy."

Pinfeather seemed to shrink visibly. He was so upset that for a moment his mind was nearly blank. Only years of servility restrained his insane desire to pick up something—anything—and bang it over the head of Boonshaft.

"I'll have to speak to Fetters about it," he finally gurgled. It was a desperate attempt to ward off disaster.

"Fetters?" Boonshaft's tone was questioning.

"Mrs. Pinfeather."

"Oh, I'll fix that," Boonshaft said, reaching for the telephone. "Why, she'll be proud to pioneer."

"No! No, sir," cried Pinfeather a bit wildly. "I'll talk to her."

But Boonshaft fixed it.

Meanwhile Pinfeather, aided by his ever-active mind's eye, mentally viewed the profane spectacle of innumerable curious persons snooping through closets and fingering his most personal possessions. With amazing clearness he saw them peering into his ice-box and prodding his bed.

Pinfeather shuddered. He muttered brokenly to himself.

"Curiosity makes more pilgrims than devotion," he was saying.

TWENTY-THREE days later, the Pinfeathers moved into the first of the Boonshaft Fourth Dimension Bungalows. Pinfeather wanted to move in at night. But Fetters wouldn't hear of it. She was, she said, proud to pioneer. So Pinfeather made his first contribution to the march of science.

He made his second contribution two

nights later. It was after returning from a movie which Fetters, "worn out with moving," had suggested.

Walking around the house to the front door, Pinfeather repeated to himself the combination of the lock. It was, he recalled, left to nine, right to zero, left to zero, right to nine, left to nine.

But Fetters, first to the radium-lighted dial, remembered the combination as left to nine, right to nine, left to zero, right to nine, left to nine. She made three flips of the dial before Pinfeather spoke.

"Did you turn right to zero?" he asked.

Fetters promptly forgot whether she was to make three turns to zero or nine turns in all. She made one turn on her spouse.

"Timothy," she said sharply, "I wish you'd leave me alone. Now you've got me all confused."

"Yes, dear."

Fetters turned back to the lock. She got off to a new start. She got off to twenty new starts. But it was not until she had skinned a knuckle, muttered three "damns," and ruined a perfectly good pair of hose, that she let Pinfeather try the door.

He began with a "zero" and a "right to nine." An hour and ten minutes later, he had started with everything from one to ten and was beginning again with "zero."

IT was at this juncture the patrolman arrived.

"What's goin' on here?" he had suddenly demanded out of the darkness, at the same time turning his flashlight on the Pinfeathers.

Fetters caught a glimpse of blue cuff and gun-metal. She promptly emitted a series of coyotelike yaps. Pinfeather unofficially broke the record for the standing high jump.

"I say," repeated the officer gruffly, "what's goin' on here?"

Pinfeather swallowed his heart and found his voice.

"Why, we're trying to get in, sir."

"An' a very amachoore-like job yer makin' of it, too."

Fetters spoke up. "Perhaps you could do better," she said acidly.

"Perhaps I could," was the cold reply, "but I'm preventin' house-breakin', not practicin' it."

"House-breaking!" Fetters gasped.

"You mean," said Pinfeather, "illegal entry?"



The influx of visitors began at four the next morning. . . . They came in an endless stream.

During the next few days, Pinfeather confirmed what he had long suspected—that pioneering has its perils. In witness whereof he now carried certain scars of honor—to-wit: a lump on the cranium, a laceration of the scalp, and a mangled fingernail.

The lump was the result of pushing a button in the kitchen with the purpose of starting the electric dishwasher. Pinfeather pushed the wrong button and a cowardly ironing-board had come down from its place of concealment in the wall and nearly brained him. The laceration was mute testimony to Pinfeather's narrow escape from being scalped by the electric hair-dryer. And the mangled fingernail was a constant reminder that the doors opened—and closed—automatically.

"I calls it house-breakin'."

"Why, officer, we live here," Fetters began to protest. "Surely, you don't think—"

But the officer did think so. Furthermore, though the Pinfeathers had not as yet made themselves liable to arrest by effecting an entrance, they were going to let themselves in for some very, v-e-r-y serious trouble, unless they moved along promptly.

They moved along to a hotel.

There a knowing clerk, noting the lack of baggage, raised the rates from five dollars to seven-fifty. So, for a dollar and a half an hour, Pinfeather listened the balance of the night to Fetters lecturing him on the virtues of memory exercises, and their relationship to combination locks.

ON the second Saturday of residence in his new home, however, Timothy Pinfeather received a jolt that was not susceptible to the healing powers of salve and bandage.

He was, at the time, serenely eating breakfast and reading his morning



"Beware," Pinfeather muttered, "the fury of a patient man!"

copy of the extremely conservative San Angeles *Times*. Turning a page, he suddenly faced a full-page advertisement. Large, bold, black type screamed for attention. It read:

FOURTH DIMENSION BUNGALOWS

Created by

BOONSHAFT

The cold, chill hand of fear clutched at the rabbit-heart of Pinfeather. He was afraid to read farther, but his eyes held fast to the printed page. He was like a person on a high building—terrified, yet fascinated by the horror of the depths below.

The words forced themselves upon his unwilling mind:

AS FAR AHEAD AS TELEVISION!

Realizing the necessity for efficient homes in this efficient era, the Boonshaft Redi-Bilt Bungalow Corporation offers for public display and approval the new BUG-IN-A-RUG BUNGALOW.

Pinfeather choked. His right hand tore at the clothing about his neck. He read on:

YOU MAKE THE GIRL—WE MAKE THE HOME!

Visit our exhibition model on West Pico Blvd. and snuggle her in the BUG-IN-A-RUG BUNGALOW. Show her the utility of the latest combination dish-and-dog-washer. Home was never like this!

COSMOPOLITAN RADIO BROADCAST

The only futuristic radio hour on the air. Featuring the crooner of crooners—Bang Valumbo and his six Boonshaft Blue Blowers. Hear Bang sing our theme song—"Cottage for Sale."

The paper fell from Pinfeather's nerveless fingers. So he was living in a BUG-IN-A-RUG BUNGALOW, was he? And was expected to snuggle, no doubt, for the public—like a puppy-love-stricken moron in a rumble seat! The thought made Pinfeather gag.

"Glurg," he gurgled.

Fetters looked up from the other side of the table.

"Timothy," she said, "you've been eating too fast again."

"Glug."



"Timothy, have you gone mad?"
shrieked Fetters.

"Now you'll have another spell with your stomach."

There was a sound like that of water running out of a bathtub.

Fetters pushed back her chair. "I'd better get you some bicarbonate."

Pinfeather looked vacantly at his wife. He did not protest. Actually, he was unaware that she had spoken. His filing-cabinet mind was engrossed in certain mathematical calculations.

There were, he knew, more than a million persons in San Angeles. Of this number, at least one-fourth were retired rustics whose sole purpose in life was the nourishing of an insatiable curiosity. It figured then, at a very conservative estimate, which discounted all other types of visitors, that the Pinfeathers could count on something like five hundred callers a day for the next year. Pinfeather trembled; his mind's eye was busy again. . . .

But the figments of his mind at its wildest never approached the grim reality of the next day. The influx of visitors began at four the next morning. Pinfeather was routed out of bed to act as pajama-clad guide to a party of early-

morning golfers. And a group of fishermen were at the door before the golfers completed the round of the lower floor.

After that they came in an endless stream. It was only by working in shifts that the Pinfeathers managed to dress. Breakfast was eaten on the run.

By ten o'clock, Pinfeather was wincing under the pressure of his seven hundred and sixty-first handshake. He had, it seemed, been pawing the public for days. His right hand was as tender as a *filet-mignon* steak and had much the same general appearance.

Pinfeather's nerves were as raw as his hand. He was for the first time in his life seriously considering assorted physical violence as an outlet for his feeling. He was in this condition when Boonshaft and Faxe arrived.

"Ho!" said the president heartily. "Some crowd, eh?" He grabbed at Pinfeather's hand and wrung it viciously. "I guess that little old advertising campaign didn't pack 'em in! And I got an ace in the hole that'll bring 'em out in thousands next week."

Despite the excruciating agony of crushed fingers, Pinfeather forced a smile of welcome. But it was a gruesome thing to see—like that of a courtier to whom the King of Siam is presenting an exceptionally large and voracious white elephant. There was, however, something in the eyes behind that smile, that the King of Siam seldom sees. It was a glint of rebellion.

"Faxe, suppose you meet the folks here for a moment while I explain about the dedication ceremonies to Pinfeather and his wife." Boonshaft turned to the clerk. "Where is Mrs. Pinfeather?"

"Up in the kitchen, I suppose," said Pinfeather, in a surly tone. It was a tone that surprised him. He was astounded that it should be so easy. He waited for Boonshaft to ask another question so he could try it again. It was, he decided, absolute contrariness that kept the president silent.

As Pinfeather had suggested, Fetters was in the kitchen. She was demonstrating the refrigerator to a group of women when the two men entered.

"Oh, yes," she was saying, "it has all the latest innovations: Vegetable dehydrator. Silent operation. Constant ice-water. Foot-controlled doors. And large enough to hold a quarter of beef, too."

"Think of that," marveled one of the women. "A whole quarter of beef! It seems almost unbelievable."

"Why, it'll do that easily," interrupted Boonshaft, turning to take his companion by the arm. "Here, Pinfeather, hop in there a moment while I show this lady."

To Pinfeather's everlasting credit, let it be said that he hesitated. But old habits are strong—he was crouched in the refrigerator before disagreement could overcome instinct.

Boonshaft, by way of demonstration, alternately opened and closed the door. Unluckily for Pinfeather, it happened to be closed when a scream from the lower floor echoed through the house. As one person, the group around the refrigerator bolted in the direction of the sound.

However, they were disappointed. It developed that no one had been killed, or even maimed. A woman had merely thrust her finger against the top of the electric stove to see if it was hot.

She had emitted one screech of anguish and promptly fainted on the spot. It required fifteen minutes of combined effort on the part of her husband, of Boonshaft and of Feters to revive her. It was then that Boonshaft remembered Pinfeather . . .

Meanwhile, cramped in the refrigerator, Pinfeather had for a few moments waited patiently for the door to open. The temperature of twenty-eight degrees, however, quickly penetrated his thin summer clothing. So Pinfeather rapped on the door. There was no response. Pinfeather pounded. Still no reply. Pinfeather yelled.

DURING the remainder of his imprisonment, Pinfeather felt the emotions of irritation, anger, uncertainty, fear and horror. His teeth were chattering and he was blowing on his fingers, while exerting "the will to live," when Boonshaft and Feters opened the refrigerator.

Pinfeather came out of his mechanical igloo in a hurry. In a larger man, his feeling would have been called a "thundering rage." In Pinfeather, it was more aptly described as "hopping mad." For the Pinfeather leaving the refrigerator was a different Pinfeather than the man who had gone in.

After all, a man can stand only so much. And this new Pinfeather was very near the breaking-point.

But Boonshaft was unaware of this. Satisfied that Pinfeather was uninjured, he was only mindful of the ludicrous side of the situation. He made the mistake of laughing about it.

"Ha! Ha!" he roared. "By gosh!

Ho! Ho! We forgot you for a moment in the excitement. Ha! Ha!"

"So you forgot me, did you?" Pinfeather actually snarled as he rose to his feet.

"Ha! Ha! Yes, sir—*whee!*—so we did. Ha! Ha!"

Pinfeather quivered. It had come to him with startling clearness that if the laughing hyena before him didn't shut up, something was going to happen.

"Mr. Boonshaft," he began, "I am a very patient man. I—"

"Patience," interrupted Boonshaft, choking with laughter, "is the virtue of an ass. Ho! Ho! Haw! Haw! Haw!"

IT was the last straw. With all the quotations in the world to choose from, Boonshaft had used this one. And Pinfeather knew the answer.

"Beware," he muttered between clenched teeth, "the fury of a patient man!"

Boonshaft never had a chance. Pinfeather executed an exact duplicate of the left to the jaw that Kid Poncho had used in felling Kid Pancho for a K. O. count. The results were exactly the same. Boonshaft did not fall; he collapsed!

"Well," said Pinfeather, eying his left fist with unconcealed satisfaction, "that's that!"

The remark brought Feters out of her speechless amazement.

"Timothy," she shrieked, "have you gone mad?"

Pinfeather was slow in replying. He was trying to recall what some of his pugilistic heroes might say under similar circumstances.

"Yer damn' right," was what he finally decided on.

Feters gasped.

On the floor, Boonshaft raised himself on one elbow and uttered a series of groans. Tenderly he touched a jawbone that pulsated with pain. He winced. Suddenly his face purpled with choleric wrath, and he shook a threatening finger at Pinfeather.

"You're fired!" he screamed passionately. "Do you hear? Fired!"

Pinfeather started violently. The words apparently had reached his inner, conservative self. He blinked. Then, almost instantly, the joyous light in his eyes was replaced by a look of dull apathy. His shoulders sagged.

He had struck his employer!

What manner of insanity, he wondered,

must have seized him? Imagine anyone in his right mind hitting a boss—and bosses practically an extinct species! Pinfeather groaned.

"Fired?" he mumbled. "Did you say 'fired'?"

"Fired!" affirmed Boonshaft viciously.

Pinfeather sank slowly into the depths of mental dejection. His shoulders became even more stooped. Obviously he was breaking up.

Boonshaft gloated.

It was at this critical moment that a voice spoke from the doorway. Its tone was one of unconcealed admiration. Almost miraculously, it voiced the only thought capable of elevating Pinfeather immediately from the depths of despair to the peaks of promise.

"Geel!" said the voice. "What a left hook!"

Startled, the three in the room turned in the direction of the speaker. They saw in the doorway a vigorous, smiling and rotund individual who was eying Pinfeather in open admiration.

THE man was unknown to Fetter, but Pinfeather and Boonshaft recognized him instantly. He was Malone, president of Factri-Cut Homes.

"Yes, sir," Malone repeated enthusiastically, "that was some wallop!" He laughed and pointed in the direction of Boonshaft. "And it flattened that old bag of wind lower than the sales'll be on this Fourth Dimension Bungalow of his!"

Pinfeather smiled faintly at this praise.

"It was," he admitted, "if I may say so, right on the button."

Boonshaft choked in impotent rage. Spluttering, he struggled to his feet. After a time, he managed to speak.

"Pinfeather," he rasped, "you'll regret this! Mark my words! Wait until you've spent a few days walking the streets." Boonshaft shook his finger directly under Pinfeather's nose. "Don't forget that you're fired! Fired!"

"And hired," said Malone calmly, "by Factri-Cut."

Boonshaft turned angrily toward his business rival.

"What's this? What's this?"

Pinfeather was looking at Malone with eyes of mingled hope and wonderment.

"You mean—" he began.

"Exactly," nodded Malone. "Factri-Cut can use men of your caliber and experience, even if Redi-Bilt can't."

Pinfeather, like a man relieved of a great burden, slowly straightened. The look that had been in his eyes when Boonshaft lay groaning on the floor, was returning.

"Malone,"—Boonshaft was raging,— "I'll break you for this! Butting into my affairs!"

Malone laughed.

"You might, at that," he agreed, "if you don't break a blood-vessel talking about it." He took Pinfeather by the arm and started back toward the door. "Now, Mr. Pinfeather, about your salary—"

Events had occurred so swiftly for Pinfeather that he was still slightly bewildered. It was not until he was leaving the room with Malone that order came out of chaos and his new-found strength reasserted itself. Excusing himself to his companion, he turned back to Boonshaft.

"As far as I'm concerned," he said, "you and your company may accept my resignation."

"Resignation?" Boonshaft shook with anger. "You mean to tell me—"

"When I say resignation, I mean resignation." Pinfeather doubled his left fist. He frowned and his voice was threatening.

"You'll pay for this, Pin—"

"How," asked Pinfeather, "would you like another—er—sock in the puss?"

Boonshaft cringed.

"But, Pinfeather—"

"Mr. Pinfeather, and Sir—to you!"

"Yes, sir," said Boonshaft meekly.

PINFEATHER strutted haughtily toward the door. As he crossed the room, there was no remorse in his bantam-rooster gait. Only when he rejoined Malone did he seem to falter momentarily. He turned again to Boonshaft; there was a barely perceptible note of anxiety in his voice.

"Say," he questioned, "did anyone ever knock you down with one punch before?"

Boonshaft mustered what little dignity he still retained.

"I was never," he replied, "knocked down before!"

Pinfeather smiled. The faint aura of indecision about him evaporated. His carriage was again that of a man who sees new worlds to conquer. He spoke once more before leaving the room, but now the note of anxiety was gone.

"Then," he said, "the Pinfeathers, like the Boonshafts, are proud to pioneer!"

Held captive by a savage African secret society, an American girl struggles for freedom—while Tarzan of the Apes leads his black cohorts to battle.



TARZAN and

The Story So Far:

THREE branches tossed madly as the forest bent beneath the heavy hand of Usha the wind. The girl awoke—and in a flash of lightning saw a man entering her tent—Golato the headman. "What do you want, Golato?" she asked.

"You, Kali Bwana," he replied huskily.

From a holster by her cot the girl drew a revolver. "Get out of here," she said, "or I'll kill you!"

For answer the black leaped toward her. She fired.

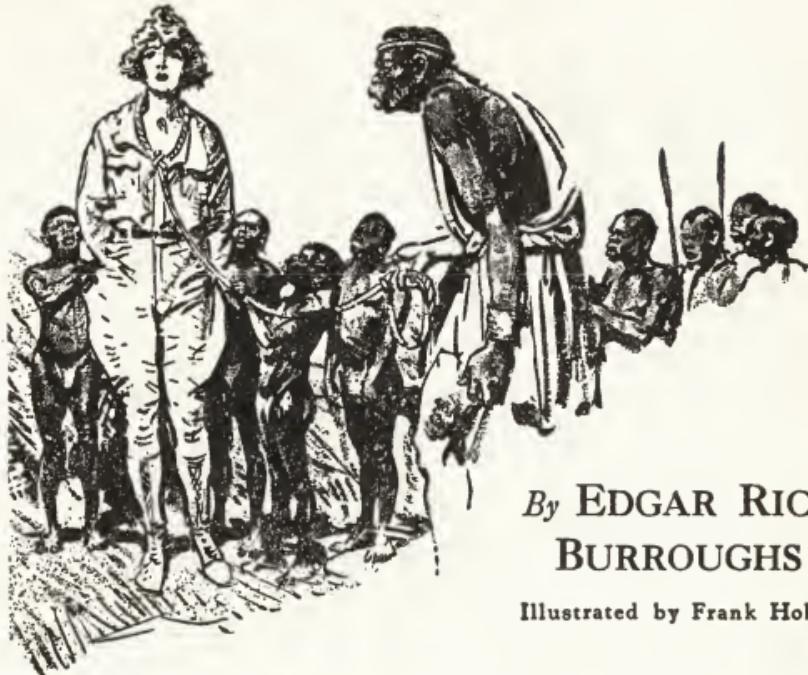
Next day the wounded headman and the rest of the safari deserted; the girl was left alone in the heart of Africa.

Meanwhile a strange thing had happened not far away. For that greatest of all adventurers Tarzan of the Apes (born the son of an English lord, but through remarkable circumstance brought up among the wild folk of Africa to become Lord of the Jungle) had suffered a wilderness accident: a great tree-branch torn loose by the tempest had knocked

him unconscious. Tarzan recovered his senses suffering from that complete forgetfulness which sometimes follows a heavy blow on the head. He did not know even his own identity; but the native who rescued him christened him "Muzimo," believing him the reincarnated spirit of one of his own ancestors.

As Muzimo, then, Tarzan hunted with the native Orando, and shared his battles. For Orando's friend Nyamwegi had been killed by the Leopard Men, that extraordinary cannibalistic African secret society whose members adorn themselves with leopard skins, wear masks fashioned of leopard heads—and strike down their human victims with iron claws made to resemble those of the leopard. Tarzan accompanied Orando back to his village, where Orando told of his friend's death, and proposed a war-party to pursue the Leopard Men and exact vengeance. His guiding spirit Muzimo, Orando explained, would aid them in this raid.

Despite the angry protests of the witch-



By EDGAR RICE
BURROUGHS

Illustrated by Frank Hoban

the Leopard Men

doctor Sobito, preparations began for a raid upon the dreaded enemy. Warriors from other villages joined them; among these was one Lupingu, a traitor.

While this was happening, two wandering ivory-poachers—Americans, but who knew each other only as "the Kid," and "Old-timer"—had struck out separately from their base camp, and Old-timer had come upon the exhausted and almost starved white girl. During the white man's absence next day, the black he had detailed to guard the girl was killed by the Leopard Men, and she was taken away to their stronghold. Old-timer followed, heedless of the protests of his remaining porters, whose pleas were proven justified when his demand for the girl was met by a curt refusal and he himself was made prisoner. Though the sub-chief Bobolo falsely promised him his freedom, Old-timer was that night transported down-river to the secret temple, where preparations were being made for a savage cannibal orgy. The

white man, an unwilling spectator, was suddenly electrified at beholding the girl he sought. Garbed in bizarre fashion, she was presented to the warriors as their high priestess—while from the mouth of a live leopard chained to a post came weird and incredible confirmation, in human speech! The frenzied orgy was at its height when Bobolo, craftily planning to kidnap the girl for himself, but hoping to cast the blame upon Old-timer, conducted the two whites, unnoticed, from the main chamber. But, befuddled by drink and feasting, he forgot to return—and after hearing sounds of the warriors' departure, Old-timer and the girl slipped warily out of the temple, luckily found a canoe, and with a silent prayer of thanksgiving, they drifted down toward the great river. (*The story continues in detail:*)

INTO the camp of the sleeping Utengas dropped Muzimo and the Spirit of Nyamwegi an hour after midnight.



Among the dead and wounded Orando found Muzimo unconscious — like mortal clay! The son of the chief was surprised and grieved.

No sentry had seen them pass, a fact which did not at all surprise the sentries, who knew that spirits pass through the forest unseen at all times if they choose to do so.

Orando, being a good soldier, had just made the rounds of his sentry posts and was still awake when Muzimo located him. "What news have you brought me, O Muzimo?" demanded the son of Lobongo. "What word of the enemy?"

"We have been to his village," replied Muzimo, "the Spirit of Nyamwegi, Lupingu, and I."

"And where is Lupingu?"

"He remained there after carrying a message to Gato Mgungu."

"You gave the traitor his liberty!" exclaimed Orando.

"It will do him little good. He was dead when he entered the village of Gato Mgungu."

"How then could he carry a message to the chief?"

"He carried a message of terror that the Leopard Men understood. He told them that traitors do not go unpunished. He told them that the power of Orando is great."

"And what did the Leopard Men do?"

"They fled to their temple to consult the high priest and the Leopard God. We followed them there; but they did not learn much from the high priest or

the Leopard God, for they all got very drunk upon beer—all except the leopard, and he cannot talk when the high priest cannot talk. I came to tell you that their village is now almost deserted except for the women, the children, and a few warriors. This would be a good time to attack it, or to lie in ambush near it awaiting the return of the warriors from the temple. They will be sick, and men do not fight so well when they are sick."

"Now is a good time," agreed Orando, clapping his palms together to awaken the sleepers near him.

"In the temple of the Leopard God I saw one whom you know well," remarked Muzimo as the sleepy headmen aroused their warriors. "He is a priest of the Leopard God."

"I know no Leopard Men," replied Orando.

"You knew Lupingu—although you did not know that he was a Leopard Man," Muzimo reminded him; "and you know Sobito. It was he whom I saw behind the mask of a priest. He is a Leopard Man."

Orando was silent for a moment. "You are sure?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then when he went to consult the spirits and the demons, and was gone from the village of Tumbai for many

days, he was with the Leopard Men instead," said Orando. "Sobito is a traitor. He shall die."

"Yes," agreed Muzimo. "Sobito shall die."

ALONG the winding forest trail Muzimo guided the warriors of Orando toward the village of Gato Mgungu. They moved as rapidly as the darkness and the narrow trail would permit, and at length he halted them at the edge of the field of manioc that lies between the forest and the village. After that they crept silently down toward the river when Muzimo had ascertained that the Leopard Men had not returned from the temple. There they waited, hiding among the bushes that grew on either side of the landing-place, while Muzimo departed to scout down the river.

He was gone but a short time when he returned with word that he had counted twenty-nine canoes paddling upstream toward the village. "Though thirty canoes went down-river to the temple," he explained to Orando, "these must be the Leopard Men returning."

Orando crept silently among his warriors, issuing instructions and exhorting them to bravery. The canoes were approaching. They could hear the paddles now, dipping, dipping, dipping. The Utengas waited—tense, eager. The first canoe touched the bank and its warriors leaped out. Before they had drawn their heavy craft out on the shore the second canoe shot in. Still the Utengas awaited the signal of their leader. Now the canoes were grounding in rapid succession. A line of warriors was stringing out toward the village gate. Twenty canoes had been drawn up on the shore when Orando gave the signal, a savage battle-cry that was taken up by ninety howling warriors, as spears and arrows flew into the ranks of the Leopard Men.

The charging Utengas broke through the straggling line of the enemy. The Leopard Men, taken wholly by surprise, thought only of flight. Those who had been cut off at the river sought to launch their canoes and escape; those who had not yet landed turned their craft downstream. The remainder fled toward the village, closely pursued by the Utengas. At the closed gates, which the defenders feared to open, the fighting was fierce; at the river it was little better than a slaughter as the warriors of Orando cut down the terrified Leopard Men struggling to launch their canoes.

When it was too late the warriors left to guard the village opened the gates with the intention of making a sortie against the Utengas. Already the last of their companions had been killed or had fled, and when the gates swung open a howling band of Utengas swarmed through.

The victory was complete; no living soul was left within the palisaded village of Gato Mgungu when the blood-spattered warriors of Orando put the torch to its thatched huts.

From down the river the escaping Leopard Men saw the light of the flames billowing upward above the trees that lined the bank, saw their reflection on the surface of the broad river behind them, and knew the proportions of the defeat that had overwhelmed them. Gato Mgungu, squatting in the bottom of his canoe, saw the flames from his burning village—saw in them, perhaps, the waning of his savage and ruthless power. Bobolo saw them, and reading the same story, knew that Gato Mgungu need no longer be feared. Of all that band of fleeing warriors Bobolo was the least depressed.

BY the light of the burning village Orando took stock of his loss, mustering his men and searching for dead and wounded. From a tree beyond the manioc field a little monkey screamed and chattered. It was the Spirit of Nyamwegi calling to Muzimo. But Muzimo did not answer. Among the dead and wounded Orando found him, like mortal clay, lying stretched out upon his back, unconscious from a blow upon the head.

The son of the chief was surprised and grieved; his followers were shocked. They had been certain that Muzimo was of the spirit world, and therefore immune from death. Suddenly they realized that they had won the battle without his aid. He was a fraud! Filled with blood lust, they would have vented their chagrin by spear-thrusts into his lifeless body; but Orando stopped them.

"Spirits do not always remain in the same form," he reminded them. "Perhaps he has entered another body or, unseen, is watching us from above. If that is so he will avenge any harm that you do this body he has quitted." In the light of their knowledge this seemed quite possible to the Utengas; so they desisted from their proposed mutilation and viewed the body with renewed awe. "Furthermore," continued Orando, "man

or ghost, he was loyal to me; and those of you who saw him fight know that he fought bravely and well."

"That is so," agreed a warrior.

"Tarzan! Tarzan!" shrieked the Spirit of Nyamwesi from the tree at the edge of the manioc field. "Tarzan of the Apes, Nkima is afraid!"

THE white man paddled the stolen canoe down the sluggish stream toward the great river, depending upon the strong current for aid to carry him and the girl to safety. Kali Bwana sat silent in the bottom of the craft. She had torn the barbaric headdress from her brow and the horrid necklace of human teeth from her throat; but she retained the bracelets and anklets.

Old-timer felt almost certain of success. The Leopard Men who had preceded him down the stream must have been returning to their village; there was no reason to expect that they would return immediately. There was no canoe at the temple, therefore there could be no pursuit; for Bobolo had assured him that there were no trails through the forest leading to the temple of the Leopard Men. He was almost jubilant as the canoe moved slowly into the mouth of the stream and he saw the dark current of the river stretching before him.

Then he heard the splash of paddles, and his heart seemed to leap into his throat. Throwing every ounce of his muscle and weight into the effort, he turned the prow of the canoe toward the right bank, hoping to hide in the dense shadows, undiscovered, until the other craft had passed. It was very dark, so dark that he had reason to believe his plan would succeed.

Suddenly the oncoming canoe loomed out of the darkness. It was only a darker blur against the darkness of the night. Old-timer held his breath. The girl crouched low behind a gunwale lest her blonde hair and fair skin might be visible to the occupants of the other boat even in the darkness that engulfed all other objects. The canoe passed on up the stream.

The broad river lay just ahead now; on it there would be less danger of detection. Old-timer dipped his paddle and started the canoe again upon its interrupted voyage. As the current caught it, it moved more rapidly. They were out upon the river! A dark object loomed ahead of them; it seemed to rise up out of the water directly in front

of their craft. Old-timer plied his paddle in an effort to alter the course of the canoe, but too late. There was a jarring thud as it struck the object in its path, which the man had already recognized as a canoe filled with warriors.

Almost simultaneously another canoe pulled up beside him. There was a babel of angry questions and commands. Old-timer recognized the voice of Bobolo. Warriors leaped into the canoe and seized him, fists struck him, powerful fingers dragged him down. He was overpowered and bound.

Again he heard the voice of Bobolo: "Hurry! We are being pursued. The Utengas are coming!"

Brawny hands grasped the paddles. Old-timer felt the canoe shoot forward, and a moment later it was being driven frantically up the smaller river toward the temple. The heart of the white man went cold with dread. He had had the girl upon the threshold of escape. Such an opportunity would never come again. Now she was doomed. He did not think of his own fate; he thought only of the girl. He searched through the darkness with his eyes, but could not find her; then he spoke to her. He wanted to comfort her.

He called again, but she did not answer. "Be quiet!" growled a warrior near him.

"Where is the girl?" demanded the white man.

"Be quiet," insisted the warrior. "There is no girl here."

AS the canoe in which Bobolo rode swung alongside that in which the girl and the white man were attempting to escape, it had brought the chief close to the former, so close that even in the darkness of the night he had seen her fair skin and her blonde hair. Instantly he had recognized his opportunity and seized it. Reaching over the gunwales of the two canoes he had dragged her into his own; then he had voiced the false alarm which he knew would send the other canoes off in a panic.

The warriors with him were all his own men. His village lay on the left bank of the river farther down. A low-voiced command sent the canoe out into the main current of the river, and willing hands sped it upon its course.

The girl, who had passed through so much and had seen escape almost assured, was stunned by the sudden turn of events that had robbed her of the



"The flesh of those
who die slowly and
in pain is tender."

only creature to whom she might look for aid. Hope died in her breast.

To Old-timer, bound and helpless, the return journey to the temple was only a dull agony of vain regrets. It made little difference to him now what they did to him. He knew they would kill him, and he hoped the end would come speedily, but he knew enough about the methods of cannibals to be almost certain that death would be slow and horrible.

As they dragged him into the temple he saw the floor strewn with the bodies of the drunken priests and priestesses. The noise of their entrance aroused Imigeg, the high priest. He rubbed his eyes sleepily and then rose unsteadily to his feet.

"What has happened?" he demanded.

Gato Mgungu strode into the room at the moment, his canoe having followed closely upon that in which Old-timer had been brought back. "Enough has happened!" he snapped. "While you were all drunk this white man escaped. The Utengas have killed my warriors and burned my village. What is the matter with your medicine, Imigeg? It is no good."

The high priest looked about him, a dazed expression in his watery eyes. "Where is the white priestess?" he cried. "Did she escape?"

"I saw only the white man," replied Gato Mgungu.

"The white priestess was there too," volunteered a warrior. "Bobolo took her into his canoe."

"Then she should be along soon," of-

fered Gato Mgungu. "Bobolo's canoe cannot have been far behind mine."

"She shall not escape again," said Imigeg, "nor shall the man. Bind him well, and put him in the small room at the rear of the temple."

"Kill him!" cried Gato Mgungu. "Then he cannot run away again."

"We shall kill him later," replied Imigeg, who had not relished Gato Mgungu's irreverent tone or his carping criticism, and desired to reassert his authority.

"Kill him now," insisted the chief, "or he will get away from you again; and if he does, the white men will come with their soldiers and kill you and burn the temple."

"I am high priest," replied Imigeg haughtily. "I take orders from no one but the Leopard God. I shall question him. What he says I shall do." He turned toward the sleeping leopard and prodded it with a sharp-pointed pole. The great cat leaped to its feet, its face convulsed by a horrid snarl. "The white man escaped," explained Imigeg to the leopard. "He has been captured again. Shall he die tonight?"

"No," replied the leopard. "Tie him securely and place him in the small room at the rear of the temple; I am not hungry."

"Gato Mgungu says to kill him now," continued Imigeg.

"Tell Gato Mgungu that I speak only through Imigeg, the high priest. I do not speak through Gato Mgungu. Because Gato Mgungu had evil in his mind I have caused his warriors to be slain and his village to be destroyed. If he



Priestesses armed with heavy clubs rushed in; but a priest pretended to protect him.

thinks evil again he shall be destroyed, that the children of the Leopard God may eat. I have spoken."

Gato Mgungu was deeply impressed and thoroughly frightened. "Shall I take the prisoner to the back of the temple and see that he is safely bound?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Imigeg, "take him—and see to it that you bind him so that he cannot escape."

CHAPTER XII THE SACRIFICE

TARZAN! Tarzan!" shrieked the Spirit of Nyamwegi from the tree at the edge of the manioc field. "Tarzan of the Apes, Nkima is afraid!"

The white giant lying upon the ground opened his eyes and looked about him. He saw Orando and many warriors gathered about. A puzzled expression overspread his countenance. Suddenly he leaped to his feet.

"Nkima! Nkima!" he called in the language of the great apes. "Where are you, Nkima? Tarzan is here!"

The little monkey leaped from the tree and came bounding across the field of manioc. With a glad cry he leaped to the shoulder of the white man and throwing his arms about the bronzed neck

pressed his cheek close to that of his master; and there he clung, whimpering with joy.

"You see," announced Orando to his fellows, "Muzimo is not dead!"

The white man turned to Orando. "I am not Muzimo," he said; "I am Tarzan of the Apes." He touched the monkey. "This is not the Spirit of Nyamwegi; he is Nkima. Now I remember everything. For a long time I have been trying to remember, but until now I could not."

There was none among them who had not heard of Tarzan of the Apes. He was a legend of the forest and the jungle that had reached to their far country. Like the spirits and the demons which they never saw, they had never expected to see him. Perhaps Orando was a little disappointed; yet on the whole, it was a relief to all of them to discover that this was a man of flesh and blood, motivated by the same forces that actuated them, subject to the same laws of Nature that controlled them. It had always been a bit disconcerting never to be sure in what strange form the ancestral spirit of Orando might choose to appear, nor to know of a certainty that he would not turn suddenly from a benign to a malign force; and so they accepted him in his new rôle, but with this difference—where formerly he had

seemed the creature of Orando, doing his bidding as a servant does the bidding of his master, now he seemed suddenly clothed in the dignity of power and authority. The change, so subtly wrought that it was scarcely apparent, was due doubtless to the psychological effect of the reawakened mentality of the white man over that of his black companions.

They made camp beside the river near the ruins of Gato Mgungu's village, for there were fields of manioc and plantain which together with the captured goats and chickens of the Leopard Men, insured full bellies after the lean fare of the days of marching and fighting.

During the long day Tarzan's mind was occupied with many thoughts. He had recalled now why he had come into this country, and he marveled at the coincidence of later events which had guided his footsteps along the very paths he had intended treading before accident had robbed him of the memory of his purpose. He knew now that depredations by Leopard Men from a far country had caused him to set forth upon a lonely reconnaissance with only the thought of locating their fabled stronghold and temple. That he should have been successful both in finding these and in reducing one of them was gratifying in the extreme, and he felt thankful now for the accident that had been responsible for the results.

His mind was still not entirely clear on certain details; but these were returning gradually, and as evening and the evening meal was under way he suddenly recalled the white man and the white girl whom he had seen in the temple of the Leopard God. He spoke to Orando about them, but the black knew nothing of them.

"If they were in the temple they probably have been killed by now," he volunteered.

Tarzan sat immersed in thought for a time. He did not know these people, yet he felt a certain obligation to them because they were of his race. Finally he arose and called Nkima, who was munching on a plantain that a warrior was sharing with him.

"Where are you going?" asked Orando.

"To the temple of the Leopard God," replied Tarzan.

OLD-TIMER had lain all day tightly bound and without food or water. Occasionally a priest or a priestess had looked in to see that he had not es-

caped or loosened his bonds, but otherwise he had been left alone. The inmates of the temple had stirred but little during the day, most of them being engaged in sleeping off the effects of the previous night's debauch; but with the coming of night the prisoner heard increased evidence of activity. There were sounds of chanting from the temple chamber, and above the other noises the shrill voice of the high priest and the growls of the leopard. His thoughts during those long hours were often of the girl. He had heard the warrior tell Imiteg that Bobolo had captured her, and he supposed that she was again being forced to play her part on the dais with the Leopard God. At least he might see her again—that would be something—but hope that he might rescue her had ebbed so low that it could no longer be called hope.

HE was trying to reason against his better judgment that having once escaped from the temple they could do so again, when a priest entered the room, bearing a torch. He was an evil-appearing old fellow whose painted face accentuated the savagery of his visage. He was, in fact, Sobito, the witch-doctor of Tumbai. Stooping, he commenced to untie the cords that secured the white man's ankles.

"What are they going to do to me?" demanded Old-timer.

A malevolent grin bared Sobito's yellow fangs. "What do you suppose, white man?"

Old-timer shrugged. "Kill me, I suppose."

"Not too quickly," explained Sobito. "The flesh of those who die slowly and in pain is tender."

"You old devil!" the prisoner exclaimed.

Sobito licked his lips. He delighted in inflicting torture either physical or mental, and here was an opportunity he could not forgo. "First your arms and legs will be broken," he explained; "then you will be placed upright in a hole in the swamp and fastened so that you cannot get your mouth or nose beneath the surface and drown yourself. You will be left there three days, by which time your flesh will be tender." He paused.

"And then?" asked the white. His voice was steady, for he determined that he would not give them the added satisfaction of witnessing his mental anguish,

and he prayed that when the time came that he must suffer physically he might have the strength to endure the ordeal in a manner that would reflect credit upon his race. Three days! God, what a fate to anticipate!

"And then?" repeated Sobito. "Then you will be carried into the temple, and the children of the Leopard God will tear you to pieces with their steel claws. Look!" He exhibited the long, curved weapons which dangled from the ends of the loose leopard-skin sleeves of his garment.

"After which you will eat me, eh?"

"Yes."

"I hope you choke."

Sobito had at last untied the knots that had secured the bonds about the white man's ankles. He gave him a kick and told him to rise.

"Are you going to kill and eat the white girl, too?" demanded Old-timer.

"She is not here; Bobolo has stolen her. Because you helped her to escape, your suffering shall be greater. I have already suggested to Imigeg that he remove your eyeballs after your arms and legs are broken. I forgot to tell you that we shall break each of them in three or four places."

"Your memory is failing," commented Old-timer, "but I hope that you have not forgotten anything else."

SOBITO grunted. "Come with me," he demanded, and led the white man through the dark corridor to the great chamber where the Leopard Men were gathered.

At sight of the prisoner a savage cry broke from a hundred and fifty throats; the leopard growled, the high priest danced upon the upper dais, the hideous priestesses screamed and leaped forward as though bent upon tearing the white man to pieces. Sobito pushed the prisoner to the summit of the lower dais and dragged him before the high priest.

"Here is the sacrifice!" he screamed.

"Here is the sacrifice!" cried Imigeg, addressing the Leopard God. "What are your commands, O Father of the Leopard Children?"

The bristling muzzle of the great beast wrinkled into a snarl as Imigeg prodded him with his sharp pole, and from the growling throat the answer seemed to come: "Let him be broken, and on the third night let there be a feast!"

"And what of Bobolo and the white priestess?" demanded Imigeg.

"Send warriors to fetch them to the temple that Bobolo may be broken for another feast. The white girl I give to Imigeg, the high priest. When he tires of her we shall feast again."

"It is the word of the Leopard God," cried Imigeg. "As he commands, it shall be done."

"Let the white man be broken," growled the leopard, "and on the third night let my children return that each may be made wise by eating the flesh of a white man. When you have eaten of it the white man's weapons can no longer harm you. Let the white man be broken!"

"Let the white man be broken!" shrieked Imigeg.

INSTANTLY a half dozen priests leaped forward and seized Old-timer, throwing him heavily to the clay floor of the dais. Here they pinioned him, stretching his arms and legs far apart, while four priestesses armed with heavy clubs rushed forward. A drum commenced to boom weirdly somewhere in the temple, beating a savage cadence to which the priestesses danced about the prostrate form of their victim.

Now one rushed in and flourished her club above the prisoner; but a priest pretended to protect him, and the woman danced out again to join her companions in the mad whirl of the dance. Again and again was this repeated, but each succeeding time the priests seemed to have greater difficulty in repulsing the frenzied women.

That it was all acting, all part of a savage ceremony, the white man realized almost from the first, but what it was supposed to portray he could not imagine. If they had hoped to wring some evidence of fear from him, they failed. Lying upon his back, he watched them with no more apparent concern than an ordinary dance might have elicited.

Perhaps it was because of his seeming indifference that they dragged the dance out to great lengths, that they howled the louder, and that the savagery of their gestures and their screams beggared description; but the end, he knew, was inevitable. The fate that Sobito had pictured had been no mere idle threat. Old-timer had long since heard that among some cannibal tribes this method of preparing human flesh was the rule rather than the exception. The horror of it, like a loathsome rat, gnawed at his reason. He sought to keep

his mind from contemplation of it, lest he go mad.

The warriors, aroused to frenzy by the dancing and the drum, urged the priestesses on. They were impatient for the climax of the cruel spectacle. The high priest, a master showman, sensed the temper of his audience. He made a signal, and the drumming ceased. The dancing stopped. The audience went suddenly quiet. Silence even more terrifying than the din which had preceded

for which he was to pay him in ivory. Her hopes rose. Now she could purchase safety for both of them. "Is the white man in the canoe?" she asked.

"No," replied Bobolo.

"You promised to save him," she reminded him.

"I could save but one," said Bobolo.



"I can't thank you, old man," said Old-timer huskily; "there just aren't the right words in the English language!"

it enveloped the chamber. It was then the priestesses, with raised clubs, crept stealthily toward their helpless victim.

CHAPTER XIII

DOWN-RIVER

KALI BWANA crouched in the bottom of the canoe; she heard the rhythmic dip of the paddles as powerful arms sent the craft swiftly down-stream with the current. She knew that they were out on the bosom of the large river, that they were not returning to the temple nor up-stream to the village of Gato Mgungu. Where, then,—to what new trials,—was fate consigning her?

Bobolo leaned toward her and whispered: "Do not be afraid. I am taking you away from the Leopard Men. Here are the garments you wore when you were taken to the temple."

She understood just enough of the tribal dialect that he employed to catch the sense of what he had said.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am Bobolo the chief," he replied.

Instantly she recalled that the white man had hoped for aid from this black,

"Where are you taking me?"

"To my village. There you will be safe. Nothing can harm you."

"Then you will take me on down-river to my own people?" she asked.

"Maybe-so, after a while," he answered. "There is no hurry. You stay with Bobolo. He will be good to you, for Bobolo is a very big chief with many huts and many warriors. You shall have food and slaves—no work."

The girl shuddered, for she knew the import of his words. "No!" she cried. "Oh, please let me go! The white man said that you were his friend. He will pay you; I will pay you."

"He will never pay," replied Bobolo. "If he is not already dead, he will be in a few days."

"But I can pay," she pleaded. "Whatever you ask I will pay you, if you will deliver me safely to my own people."

"I do not want pay," growled Bobolo. "I want you."

She saw that her situation was without hope. In all this hideous land the only person who knew of her danger and might have helped her was either dead or about to die, and she could not help

herself. But there was a way out! The idea flashed suddenly to her mind: *The river!*

She must not permit herself to dwell too long upon the idea—upon those cold dark waters, upon the crocodiles—lest her strength fail her. She must act instantly, without thought. She leaped to her feet. But Bobolo was too close. Upon the instant he guessed her intention and seized her, throwing her roughly to the bottom of the canoe. He was very angry and struck her heavily across the face; then he bound her, securing her wrists and her ankles.

"You will not try that again," he growled at her.

"Then I shall find some other way," she replied defiantly. "You shall not have me! It will be better for you to accept my offer—for otherwise you shall have neither me nor the pay."

"Be quiet, woman," commanded the black. "I have heard enough!" And he struck her again. . . .

For four hours the canoe sped swiftly onward; the ebon paddlers, moving in perfect rhythm, seemed tireless. The sun had risen, but from her position in the bottom of the craft the girl saw nothing but the black, swaying bodies of the paddlers nearest her.

At last she heard the sound of voices shouting from the shore. There were answering shouts from the crew of the canoe, and a moment later she felt its prow touch the bank. Then Bobolo removed the bonds from her wrists and ankles and helped her to her feet. Before her, on the river-bank, were hundreds of savages—men, women, and children. Beyond them was a village of grass-thatched, bee-hive huts, surrounded by a palisade of poles bound together with lianas.

When the eyes of the villagers alighted upon the white prisoner there was a volley of shouts and questions, and as she stepped ashore she was surrounded by a score of curious savages, among whom the women were the most unfriendly. She was struck and spat upon by them; and serious harm would have been done her had not Bobolo stalked among them, striking right and left with the haft of his spear.

Trailed by half the village, she was led into the compound to the hut of the chief, a much larger structure than any of the others, flanked by several two-room huts, all of which were enclosed by a low palisade. Here dwelt the chief



"Bind his hands and feet," commanded Tarzau, "and deliver him to me." . . . Then he lifted Sobito to his shoulder and carried him out into the forest.

and his harem with their slaves. At the entrance to the chief's compound the rabble halted, and Kali Bwana and Bobolo entered alone. Instantly the girl was surrounded again by angry women, the wives of Bobolo. There were fully a dozen of them; and they ranged in age from a child of fourteen to an ancient, toothless hag, who despite the infirmities of age appeared to dominate the others.

Again Bobolo had recourse to his spear to save his captive from serious harm. He labored the most persistent of them unmercifully until they fell back out of reach of his weapon; then he turned to the old woman.

"Ubooga," he said, addressing her, "this is my new wife. I place her in your care. See that no harm comes to her. Give her two women slaves. I shall send men-slaves to build a hut for her close to mine."

"You are a fool," cried Ubooga. "She is white. The women will not let her live in peace—if they let her live at all,—nor will they let you live in peace until she is dead or you get rid of her. You were a fool to bring her; but then, you were always a fool."

"Hold your tongue, old woman!" cried Bobolo. "I am chief. If the women molest her I will kill them—and you, too," he added.

"Perhaps you will kill the others," screamed the old hag, "but you will not

kill me. I will scratch out your eyes and eat your heart. You are the son of a pig. Your mother was a jackal. You, a chief! You would have been the slave of a slave had it not been for me! Who are you? You—" But Bobolo had fled.

With her hands on her hips the old termagant turned toward Kali Bwana. "Come, you!" she screamed, and seized the girl by the hair.

It was the last straw. Far better to die now than to prolong the agony through brutal abuse and bitter insult! Kali Bwana swung a blow to the side of Ubooga's head that sent her reeling. The other women broke into loud laughter. The girl expected that the old woman would fall upon her and kill her; but Ubooga did nothing of the kind—instead, she stood staring, with her lower jaw dropped, her eyes wide in astonishment. For a moment she stood thus; then for the first time she appeared to notice the laughter and taunts of the other women. With a maniacal scream she seized a stick and charged them. They scattered like frightened rabbits.

When Ubooga returned to the white girl she merely nodded her head in the direction of one of the huts and again said "Come!"—but this time in a less peremptory tone. In other ways too, her attitude seemed changed and far less threatening.

Having installed the girl in her own hut, under the protection of two women slaves, Ubooga hobbled to the main entrance of the chief's compound, possibly in the hope of catching a glimpse of Bobolo, concerning whom she had left a number of things unsaid; but Bobolo was nowhere to be seen. There was, however, a warrior who had returned with the chief from up-river squatting before a near-by hut while his wife prepared food for him.

Ubooga, being a privileged character and thus permitted to leave the sacred precincts of the harem, crossed over and squatted down near the warrior.

"Who is the white girl?" demanded the old woman.

The warrior was a stupid fellow, and the fact that he had recently been very drunk and had had no sleep for two nights lent him no greater acumen. Furthermore, he was very afraid of Ubooga, as who was not? He looked up dully out of red-rimmed, bloodshot eyes.

"She is the new white priestess of the Leopard God," he said.



"Where did Bobolo get her?" persisted Ubooga.

"We had come from the battle at Gato Mgungu's village, where we were defeated, and were on our way with Gato Mgungu back to the temp—" He stopped suddenly. "I don't know where Bobolo got her," he ended sullenly.

A wicked, toothless grin wrinkled Ubooga's unlovely features. "I thought so!" she cackled enigmatically and rising, hobbled back to the chief's compound.

The wife of the warrior looked at him in disgust. "So you are a Leopard Man!" she whispered accusingly.

"It is a lie!" he cried. "I said nothing of the sort."

"You did," contradicted his wife; "and you told Ubooga that Bobolo is a Leopard Man. This will not be well for Bobolo nor for you."

"Women who talk too much sometimes have their tongues cut out," he reminded her.

"It is you who have talked too much," she retorted. "I have said nothing—I shall say nothing. Do you think I want the village to know that my man is a Leopard Man?"

The order of Leopard Men is a secret order. There are few villages and no entire tribes composed wholly of Leopard Men, who are looked upon with disgust and horror by all those not mem-

bers of the feared order. Their rites and practices are viewed with contempt by even the most degraded of tribes, and to be proved a Leopard Man is equivalent to the passing of a sentence of exile or death in practically any community.

Ubooga nursed the knowledge she had gained, metaphorically cuddling it to her breast. Squatting down before her hut, she mumbled to herself; and the other women of the harem who saw her were frightened, for they saw that Ubooga smiled—and when Ubooga smiled they knew something unpleasant was going to happen to some one. They could only hope it would not happen to them! When Bobolo entered the compound they saw that she smiled more broadly, and they were relieved, knowing it was Bobolo who was to be the victim.

"Where is the white girl?" demanded Bobolo as he halted before Ubooga. "Has any harm befallen her?"

"Your priestess is quite safe, Leopard Man," hissed Ubooga, but in a voice so low that only Bobolo might hear.

"What do you mean, you old she-devil?" Bobolo's face turned a livid blue.

"For a long time I have suspected it," cackled Ubooga. "Now I know it."

Bobolo seized his knife and grasped the woman by the hair, dragging her across one knee. "You said I did not dare kill you," he growled.

"Nor do you. Listen! I have told another, who will say nothing unless I command it, or unless I die. If I die the whole village will know it and you will be torn to pieces. Now kill me, if you dare!"

BOBONO let her fall to the ground. He did not know Ubooga had lied to him—that she had told no one. He may have surmised as much; but he dared not take the chance, for he knew that Ubooga was right. His people would tear him to pieces should they discover he was a Leopard Man; nor would the other culprits in the tribe dare come to his defense. To divert suspicion from themselves they would join his executioners.

"Who told you?" he demanded. "It is a lie—whoever told you!"

"The girl is high priestess of the Leopard God," taunted Ubooga. "After you left the village of Gato Mgungu, following the fight in which you were defeated, you returned to the temple with Gato Mgungu who all men know is chief of

the Leopard Men. There you got the girl."

"It is a lie! I stole her from the Leopard Men. I am no Leopard Man."

"Then return her to the Leopard Men, and I will say nothing about the matter. I will tell no one that you are such a good friend of Gato Mgungu that you fight with him against his enemies, for then every one will know that you must be a Leopard Man."

"It is a lie," repeated Bobolo, who could think of nothing else to say.

"Lie or no lie, will you get rid of her?"

"Very well," Bobolo agreed. "In a few days."

"Today!" demanded Ubooga. "Today—or I will kill her tonight."

"Today," assented Bobolo. He turned away.

"Where are you going?"

"To get some one to take her back where the Leopard Men can find her."

"Why don't you kill her?"

"The Leopard Men would kill me if I did. They would kill many of my people. First of all would they kill my women, if I killed her."

"Go and get some one to take her away," said Ubooga, "but see that there is no trickery, you son of a warthog, you pig, you!"

Bobolo heard no more. He had fled into the village. He was very angry, but he was more afraid. He knew that what Ubooga had said was true; but his passion for the white girl still ran high. He must try to find some means to preserve her for himself; in case he failed, however, there were other uses to which she could be put. Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind as he walked the length of the village street toward the hut of his old crony Kapopa the witch-doctor, upon more than one occasion a valuable ally.

He found the old man engaged with a customer who desired a charm that would kill the mother of one of his wives. For this Kapopa had demanded three goats, in advance. There was considerable haggling, the customer insisting that his mother-in-law alive was not worth one goat—which, he argued, would reduce her value when dead to not more than a single chicken; but Kapopa was obdurate, and finally the man departed to give the matter further thought.

Bobolo plunged immediately into the matter that had brought him to the witch-doctor.

"Kapopa knows," he commenced, "that when I returned from up the river I brought a white wife with me."

Kapopa nodded. "Who in the village does not know?"

"Already she has brought me much trouble," continued Bobolo.

"And you wish to be rid of her."

"I do not. It is Ubooga who wishes to rid me of her."

"You wish a charm to kill Ubooga?"

"I have already paid you for three such charms," Bobolo reminded him, "and Ubooga still lives. I do not wish another. Your medicine is not as strong as is Ubooga."

"What do you wish?"

"I will tell you. Because the white girl is a priestess of the Leopard God, Ubooga says that I must be a Leopard Man. But that is a lie. I stole her from the Leopard Men. Everyone knows that I am no Leopard Man."

"Of course," assented Kapopa.

"But Ubooga says that she will tell everyone that I am a Leopard Man, if I do not kill the girl or send her away. What can I do?"

Kapopa sat in silence for a moment; then he rummaged in a bag that lay beside him. Bobolo fidgeted. He knew that when Kapopa rummaged in that bag it was always expensive. Finally the witch-doctor drew forth a little bundle wrapped in dirty cloth. Very carefully he untied the strings and spread the cloth upon the ground, revealing its contents—a few short twigs and a figurine carved from bone. Kapopa set the figurine in an upright position facing him, shook the twigs between his two palms, and cast them before the idol. He examined the position of the twigs carefully, scratched his head for a moment; then gathered them up, and cast them again. Once more he studied the situation in silence. Presently he looked up.

"I now have a plan," he announced.

"How much will it cost?" demanded Bobolo. "Tell me that first."

"You have a daughter," said Kapopa.

"I have many," rejoined Bobolo.

"I do not want them all."

"You may have your choice if you will tell me how I may keep the white girl without Ubooga knowing it."

"It can be done," announced Kapopa. "In the village of the little men there is no witch-doctor. For a long time they have been coming to Kapopa for their medicine. They will do whatever Kapopa asks."

"I do not understand," said Bobolo.

"The village of the little men is not far from the village of Bobolo. We shall take the white girl there. For a small payment of meal and a few fish at times they will keep her there for Bobolo until Ubooga dies. Some day she must die. Already she has lived far too long. In the meantime Bobolo can visit his wife in the village of the little men."

"You can arrange this with the little men?"

"Yes. I shall go with you and the white girl; I will arrange everything."

"Good," exclaimed Bobolo. "We will start now; when we return you may go to the harem of Bobolo and select any of his daughters that you choose."

Kapopa wrapped up the twigs and the idol and replaced them in his pouch; then he got his spear and shield.

"Fetch the white girl," he said.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RETURN OF SOBITO

THE wavering light of the smoky torches illuminated the interior of the temple of the Leopard God, revealing the barbaric, savage drama being enacted there; but outside it was very dark, so dark that the tall figure of a man moving swiftly along the river-bank might scarcely have been seen at a distance of fifty feet. He stepped quickly and silently among the canoes of the Leopard Men, pushing them out into the current of the stream. When all had been turned adrift save one, he dragged that one up the river and partially beached it opposite the rear of the temple; then he ran toward the building, scaled one of the piles to the veranda, and a moment later paused upon the tiebeam just beneath the overhanging roof at the front of the building, where through an opening, he could look down upon the tragic scene within.

He had been there a few moments before, just long enough to see and realize the precarious position of the white man. Instantly his plan of rescue had been formed, and he had dropped swiftly to the river-bank to put a part of it into immediate execution. Now that he was back he realized that a few seconds later he would have been too late. A sudden silence had fallen upon the chamber below. The black priestesses of the Leopard God were sneaking stealthily toward their prostrate victim. No longer did

the lesser priests make the histrionic pretense of protection. The end had come.

Through the aperture and into the interior of the temple swung Tarzan of the Apes. From tiebeam to tiebeam he leaped, silent as the smoke rising from the torches below. He saw that the priestesses were almost upon the white prisoner—realized that, swift as he was, he might not be able to reach the man's side in time. It was a bold, mad scheme that had formed in the active brain of the ape-man, and one that depended for success largely upon its boldness. Now it seemed foredoomed to failure even before it could be put into execution. . . .

The sudden silence, following the din of drums and yells and dancing feet, startled the tense nerves of the pinioned prisoner. He turned his eyes from side to side and saw the priestesses creeping toward him. Something told him that the final, hideous horror was upon him now. He steeled himself to meet the agony of it, lest his tormentors should have the added gratification of witnessing the visible effects of his suffering. Some inherent racial trait rebelled at the thought of showing fear or agony before these creatures of an inferior race.

The priestesses were almost upon him when a voice high above them broke the deathly silence.

"Sobito! Sobito! Sobito!" it boomed in hollow accents from the rafters of the temple. "I am the *muzimo* of Orando the friend of Nyamwesi. I have come for you! With the Spirit of Nyamwesi, I have come for you!"

Simultaneously a giant white man, naked but for a loin-cloth, ran down one of the temple pillars like an agile monkey and leaped to the lower dais. The startling interruption momentarily paralyzed the blacks, partially from astonishment and partially from fear. Sobito was speechless. His knees trembled beneath him; then recovering, he fled screaming from the dais to the protection of the concourse of warriors on the temple floor.

OLD-timer, no less astonished than the blacks, looked with amazement upon the scene. He expected to see the strange white man pursue Sobito—but he did nothing of the sort. Instead, he turned directly toward the prisoner.

"Be ready to follow me," commanded the stranger. "I shall go out through the rear of the temple." He spoke in low rapid tones and in English; then swiftly he changed to the dialect of the district.

"Capture Sobito and bring him to me," he shouted to the warriors below the dais. "Until you fetch him I shall hold this white man as hostage."

Before there could be either reply or opposition, he leaped to the side of Old-timer, hurled the terrified priests from him, and seizing him by the hand jerked him to his feet. He spoke no further word, but turned and ran swiftly across the lower dais, leaped to the higher one—where Imigeg shrank aside as they passed—and disappeared from the sight of the Leopard Men through the doorway at its rear. There he paused for a moment and stopped Old-timer.

"Where is the white girl?" he demanded. "We must take her with us."

"She is not here," replied Old-timer. "A chief stole her and, I imagine, took her down-river to his village."

"This way, then," directed Tarzan, darting into a doorway on their left.

A MOMENT later they were on the veranda, from which they gained the ground by way of one of the piles that supported the building; then the ape-man ran quickly toward the river, followed closely by Old-timer.

At the edge of the river Tarzan stopped beside a canoe.

"Get into this," he directed; "it is the only one left here. They cannot follow you. When you reach the main river you will have such a start that they cannot overtake you."

"Aren't you coming with me?"

"No," Tarzan replied, and started shoving the craft out into the stream. "Do you know the name of the chief who stole the girl?" he asked.

"It was Bobolo."

Tarzan pushed the canoe away from the bank.

"I can't thank you, old man," said Old-timer huskily; "there just aren't the right words in the English language!"

The silent figure on the river-bank made no reply, and a moment later, as the current caught the canoe, it was swallowed in the darkness. Then Old-timer seized a paddle and sought to accelerate the speed of the craft, that he might escape as quickly as possible from this silent river of mystery and death.

The canoe had scarcely disappeared in the darkness when Tarzan of the Apes turned back toward the temple. Once again he scaled a pile to the veranda and reentered the rear of the building. He heard screaming and scuffling in the front



Kali Bwana swung a blow to the side of Ubooga's head that sent her reeling.

part of the temple, and a grim smile touched his lips as he recognized the origin of the sounds. Advancing quickly to the doorway that opened upon the upper dais, he saw several warriors dragging the kicking, screaming Sobito toward him; then he stepped out upon the dais beside the Leopard God. Instantly all eyes were upon him, and fear was in every eye. The boldness of his entrance into their holy of holies, his effrontery, the ease with which he had taken their prisoner from them, had impressed them, while the fact that Sobito, a witch-doctor, had fled from him in terror, had assured them of his supernatural origin.

"Bind his hands and feet," commanded Tarzan, "and deliver him to me. The Spirit of Nyamwegi watches, waiting whom he shall kill; so delay not."

Hastily the warriors dragging Sobito secured his wrists and ankles; then they lifted him to their shoulders and carried him through the doorway at the side of the dais to the rear chambers of the temple. Here Tarzan met them.

"Leave Sobito with me," he directed.

"Where is the white prisoner you seized as hostage?" demanded one more courageous than his fellows.

"Search for him in the last room at the far end of the temple," said the ape-man; but he did not say that they would find him there! Then he lifted Sobito to his shoulder and stepped into the room

through which he had led Old-timer to freedom, and as the warriors groped through the darkness in search of their victim the huge ape-man carried Sobito, screaming loudly from fright, out into the forest.

For a long time the silent terrified listeners in the temple of the Leopard God heard the eerie wails of the witch-doctor of Tumbai growing fainter in the distance; then the warriors returned from their search of the temple to report that the prisoner was not there.

"We have been tricked!" cried Imigeg. "The *muzimo* of Orando, the Utenga, has stolen our prisoner."

"Perhaps he escaped while the *muzimo* was taking Sobito away," suggested Gato Mgungu.

"Search the island!" cried another chief.

"The canoes!" exclaimed a third.

Instantly there was a rush for the river, and then the Leopard Men realized the enormity of the disaster that had befallen them, for not a canoe was left of all those that had brought them to the temple. Their situation was worse than it might appear at first glance. Their village had been burned and those of their fellows who had not accompanied them to the temple were either dead or scattered; there was no path through the tangled mazes of the jungle; but worse still was the fact that religious

superstition forbade them from entering the dismal stretch of forest that extended from the island to the nearest trail that they might utilize. The swamps about them and the river below them were infested with crocodiles. The supply of food at the temple was not sufficient to support them for more than a few days. They were cannibals, and the weaker among them were the first to appreciate the significance of that fact.

THE warriors of Orando squatted by fires in their camp beside the manioc field of Gato Mgungu. Their bellies were full, and they were happy. Tomorrow they would start upon the return march to their own country. Already they were anticipating the reception that awaited victorious warriors. Again and again each, when he could make himself heard, recounted his own heroic exploits, none of which lost dramatic value in the retelling. A statistician overhearing them might have computed the enemy dead at full two thousand.

Their reminiscences were interrupted by the appearance of a giant figure among them. It appeared to have materialized from the air—it had not been there one moment; the next it was there! It was he whom they had known as Muzimo; it was Tarzan of the Apes. Upon his shoulder he bore the bound figure of a man.

"Tarzan of the Apes!" cried some.

"Muzimo!" cried others.

"What have you brought us?" demanded Orando.

Tarzan threw the bound figure to the ground. "I have brought back your witch-doctor," he replied. "I have brought back Sobito, who is also a priest of the Leopard God."

"It is a lie!" screamed Sobito.

"See the leopard skin upon him," exclaimed a warrior.

"And the curved claws of the Leopard Men!" cried another.

"No, Sobito is not a Leopard Man!" jeered a third.

"I found him in the temple of the Leopard Men," explained Tarzan. "I thought you would like to have your witch-doctor back to make strong medicine for you that would preserve you from the Leopard Men."

"Kill him!" screamed a warrior.

"Kill Sobito! Kill Sobito!" was taken up by four-score throats.

"Wait!" commanded Orando. "It will be better to take Sobito back to Tum-

bai, for there are many there who would like to see him die. It will give him time to think about the bad things he has done; it will make him suffer longer, as he has made others suffer; and I am sure that the parents of Nyamwegi would like to see Sobito die."

"Kill me now," begged Sobito. "I do not wish to go back to Tumbai."

"Tarzan of the Apes captured him," suggested a warrior. "Let him tell us what to do with Sobito."

"Do as you please with him," replied the ape-man. "He is not my witch-doctor! I have other business to attend to. I go now. Remember Tarzan of the Apes, if you do not see him again, and because of him treat white men kindly, for Tarzan is your friend and you are his."

As silently as he had come, he disappeared, and with him went little Nkima, whom the warriors of the Watenga country knew as the Spirit of Nyamwegi.

CHAPTER XV

THE LITTLE MEN

B OBOLO and Kapopa dragged Kali Bwana along narrow forest trails away from the great river that was the life-artery of the district, back into the dense, dismal depth of the jungle, where great beasts prowled and the little men lived. Here there were no clearings nor open fields; they passed no villages. The trails were narrow and little used and in places very low, for the little men do not have to clear trails to the same height that others must.

Kapopa went ahead, for he knew the little men better than Bobolo knew them, though both knew their methods—knew how they hid in the underbrush and speared unwary passers-by or sped poisoned arrows from trees above. They would recognize Kapopa and not molest them.

Behind Kapopa came Kali Bwana, a fiber rope around her fair neck. Behind her was Bobolo, holding the rope's end.

The girl was in total ignorance of their destination or of what fate awaited her there. She moved in a dumb lethargy of despair. She was without hope, and her only regret was that she was also without the means of ending her tragic sufferings. She saw the knife at the hip of Kapopa as he walked ahead of her, and coveted it. She thought of the dark river and the crocodiles, and regretted

them. In all respects her situation appeared to her worse than it had ever been before. Perhaps it was the depressing influence of the somber forest or the mystery of the unknown into which she was being led like some beast to the slaughter. Slaughter! The word fascinated her. She knew Bobolo was a cannibal. Perhaps they were taking her somewhere into the depths of the grim wood to slaughter and devour her. She wondered why the idea no longer revolted her, and then she guessed the truth—it postulated the relief of death. Death! More than anything else now she craved death.

How long they plodded that seemingly endless trail she did not know, but after an eternity of dull misery a voice hailed them, and Kapopa halted.

"What do you want in the country of Rebega?" demanded the voice.

"I am Kapopa the witch-doctor," replied Kapopa. "With me are Bobolo the chief, and his wife. We come to visit Rebega."

"I know you, Kapopa," replied the voice, and a second later a diminutive warrior stepped into the trail ahead of them from the underbrush at its side. He was about four feet tall and stark naked except for a necklace and some anklets and arm-bands of copper and iron, while a bow and a quiver of arrows were at his side. His unpleasant countenance bore a crafty appearance. His expression denoted surprise and curiosity as he regarded the white girl, but he asked no questions. Motioning them to follow him, he continued along the crooked trail. Almost immediately two other warriors, apparently materializing from thin air, fell in behind them; and thus they were escorted to the village of Rebega the pygmy chief.

IT was a squalid village of low huts—bisected ovals with a door two or three feet in height at each end. The huts were arranged about the periphery of an ellipse, in the center of which was the chief's hut. Surrounding the village was a crude *boma* of pointed sticks and felled timber with an opening at either end to give ingress and egress.

Rebega was a wrinkled old man. He squatted on his haunches just outside one of the entrances to his hut, surrounded by his women and children. As the visitors approached him he gave no sign of recognition, his small, beady eyes regarding them with apparent suspicion

and malice. His was indeed a most repellent visage.

Kapopa and Bobolo greeted him, but he only nodded once and grunted. To the girl his whole attitude appeared antagonistic, and when she saw the little warriors closing in about them from every hut she believed that Kapopa and Bobolo had placed themselves in a trap from which they might have difficulty in escaping. The thought rather pleased her. What the result would be for her was immaterial; nothing could be worse than the fate that Bobolo had intended for her. She had never seen pygmies before, and notwithstanding her mental perturbation, her normally active mind found interest in observing them. The women were smaller than the men, few of them being over three feet in height, while the children seemed incredibly tiny. Among them all, however, there was not a prepossessing countenance nor a stitch of clothing, and they were obviously filthy and degraded.

THERE was a moment's silence as they halted before Rebega; then Kapopa addressed him. "You know us, Rebega—Kapopa the witch-doctor, and Bobolo the chief!"

Rebega nodded. "What do you want here?" he demanded.

"We are friends of Rebega," continued Kapopa.

"Your hands are empty," observed the pygmy. "I see no presents for Rebega."

"You shall have presents if you will do what we ask," promised Bobolo.

"What do you want Rebega to do?"

"Bobolo has brought his white wife to you," explained Kapopa. "Keep her here in your village for him in safety; let no one see her—let no one know that she is here."

"What are the presents?"

"Meal, plantain, fish; every moon enough for a feast for all in your village," replied Bobolo.

"It is not enough," grunted Rebega. "We do not want a white woman in our village. Our own women make us enough trouble."

Kapopa stepped close to the chief and whispered rapidly into his ear. The sullen expression on Rebega's countenance deepened, but he appeared suddenly nervous and fearful. Perhaps Kapopa the witch-doctor had threatened him with the malign attentions of ghosts and demons if he did not accede to their request. At last he capitulated.

"Send the food at once," he said. "Even now we have not enough for ourselves, and this woman will need as much food as two of us."

"It shall be sent tomorrow," promised Bobolo. "I shall come with it myself and remain overnight. Now I must return to my village. It is getting late, and it is not well to be out after night has fallen. The Leopard Men are everywhere."

"Yes," agreed Rebega, "the Leopard Men are everywhere. I shall keep your white woman for you if you bring food. If you do not I shall send her back to your village."

"Do not do that!" exclaimed Bobolo. "The food shall be sent you."

IT was with a feeling of relief that Kali Bwana saw Bobolo and Kapopa depart. During the interview with Rebega—which was almost unintelligible to her—no one had once addressed her, just as no one would have addressed a cow he was arranging to stable. She recalled the plaints of American negroes that they were not treated with equality by the whites. Now that conditions were reversed, she could not see that the blacks were more magnanimous than the whites. Evidently it all depended upon which was the more powerful and had nothing whatsoever to do with innate gentleness of spirit or charity.

When Bobolo and Kapopa had disappeared in the forest, Rebega called to a woman who had been among the interested spectators during the interview between Rebega and his visitors. "Take the white woman to your hut," he commanded. "See that no harm befalls her. Let no stranger see her. I have spoken."

"What shall I feed her?" demanded the woman. "My man was killed by a buffalo while hunting, and I have not enough food for myself."

"Let her go hungry, then, until Bobolo brings the food he has promised. Take her away."

The woman seized Kali Bwana by the wrist and led her toward a miserable hut at the far end of the village. It seemed to the girl to be the meanest hut of all the squalid village. Filth and refuse were piled and strewn about the doorway through which she was conducted into its gloomy, windowless interior.

A number of other women had followed her guardian, and now all these crowded into the hut. They jabbered excitedly and pawed her roughly in their

efforts to examine and finger her garments and her ornaments. She could understand a little of their language, for she had been long enough now with the natives to have picked up many words, and the pygmies of this district used a dialect similar to that spoken in the villages of Gato Mgungu and Bobolo. One of them, feeling of her body, remarked that she was tender and that her flesh should be good to eat, at which they all laughed, exposing their sharp-filed, yellow teeth.

"If Bobolo does not bring food for her, she will be too thin," observed Wlala, the woman who was her guardian.

"If he does not bring food, we should eat her before she becomes too thin," advised another. "Our men hunt, but they bring little meat. They say the game has gone away. We must have meat."

They remained in the small, ill-smelling hut until it was time to go and prepare the evening meal for their men. The girl, exhausted by physical exertion and nervous strain, sickened by the close air and the stench of the hut's interior, had lain down in an effort to secure the peace of oblivion in sleep; but they had prodded her with sticks, and some of them had struck her in mere wanton cruelty. When they had gone she lay down again, but immediately Wlala struck her a sharp blow.

"You cannot sleep while I work, white woman," she cried. "Get to work!" She pressed a stone pestle into the girl's hand and indicated a large stone at one side of the hut. In a hollow worn in the stone was some corn. Kali Bwana could not understand all that woman said, but enough to know that she was to grind the corn. Wearily she commenced the work, while Wlala, just outside the hut, built her cooking-fire and prepared her supper. When it was ready the woman gobbled it hungrily, offering none to the girl. Then she came back into the hut. "I am hungry," said Kali Bwana. "Will you not give me food?"

WLALA flew into a frenzy of rage. "Give you food!" she screamed. "I have not enough food for myself. You are the wife of Bobolo; so let him bring you food!"

"I am not his wife," replied the girl. "I am his prisoner. When my friends discover how you have treated me, you will all be punished."

Wlala laughed. "Your friends will

never know," she taunted. "No one comes to the country of the Betetes. In my life I have seen only two other white-skinned people; those two we ate. No one came and punished us. No one will punish us after we have eaten you. Why did Bobolo not keep you in his own village? Were his women angry? Did they drive you out?"

"I think so," replied the girl.

"Then he will never take you back. It is a long way from the village of Bobolo to the village of Rebega. Bobolo will soon tire of coming so far to see you while he has plenty of wives in his own village; then he will give you to us." Wlala licked her thick lips.

The girl sat dejectedly before the stone mortar. She was very tired, and her hands had dropped to her sides. "Get to work, you lazy sow!" cried Wlala, and struck her across the head with the stick she kept ever ready at hand. Wearily Kali Bwana resumed her monotonous chore. "And see that you grind it fine," added Wlala; then she went out to gossip with the other women of the village.

As soon as she was gone the girl stopped working. She was so tired that she could scarcely raise the stone pestle, and she was very hungry. Glancing fearfully through the doorway of the hut, she saw that no one was near enough to see her; then, quickly, she gathered a handful of the raw flour and ate it. She dared not eat too much, lest Wlala discover the theft; but even that little was better than nothing. Then she added some fresh corn to the flour in the mortar and ground that to the same consistency as the other.

WHEN Wlala returned to the hut, the girl was asleep beside the mortar. The woman kicked her into wakefulness; but as by now it was too dark to work and the woman herself lay down to sleep, Kali Bwana was at last permitted undisturbed slumber. . . .

Bobolo did not return the following day, nor the second day, nor the third; neither did he send food. The pygmies were very angry. They had been anticipating a feast. Perhaps Wlala was the angriest, for she was the hungriest; also, she had commenced to suspect the theft of her meal. Not being positive, but to be on the safe side, she had undertaken to beat Kali Bwana unmercifully while

accusing her of it. But as she started to beat her, suddenly something quite unexpected had happened: The white girl, leaping to her feet, had seized the pygmy, torn the stick from her hand, and struck her repeatedly with it before Wlala could run from the hut. After that Wlala did not again strike Kali Bwana. On the contrary, she treated her with something approximating respect, but her voice was raised loudly in the village against the hated alien and against Bobolo.

BEFORE Rebega's hut was a con-course of women and warriors. They were all angry and hungry. "Bobolo has not brought the food," cried one, repeating for the hundredth time what had been said by each.

"What do we want of meal, or plantain, or fish when we have flesh here for all?"

And the speaker jerked a thumb meaningly in the direction of Wlala's hut.

"Bobolo would bring warriors and kill us if we harmed his white wife," cautioned another.

"Kapopa would cast a spell upon us, and many of us would die."

"He said he would come back with food the next day."

"Now it has been three days, and he has not returned."

"The flesh of the white girl is good now," argued Wlala. "She has been eating my meal—but I have stopped that; I have taken the meal from the hut and hidden it. If she does not have food soon, her flesh will not be so good as now. Let us eat her."

"I am afraid of Kapopa and Bobolo," admitted Rebega.

"We do not have to tell him that we ate her."

"They will guess it," insisted Rebega fearfully.

"We can tell them that the Leopard Men came and took her away," suggested a rat-faced little fighting-man; "and if they do not believe us we can go away. The hunting is not good here, anyway. We should go elsewhere and hunt."

For a long time Rebega's fears outweighed his natural inclination for human flesh, but at last he told them that if the food Bobolo had promised did not arrive before dark they should have a dance and a feast that night.



Stepping over the
senseless tool-
dresser, Boulder
came to meet Pop.
"There y're, Pop,"
he announced.

WITH a rending jolt that shook the oil-well derrick from its mud-sills to its crown-block, the bull-wheel brake band ripped loose, and the eight-foot brake lever thudded on the oak planking of the floor. "Boulder" Hackett, who had been riding the lever as he high-balled the string of tools to the bottom of the hole, was catapulted across the rig and dashed with a jarring thump against the "headache post." The bull-wheels, released from their restraining brake, raced into a thunderous roar. Wisps of smoke rose in acrid spirals from the hot, whining bearings of the stanchions, and from the casing mouth, in the center of the floor, came a rumbling, crashing crescendo as the four-ton string of tools hurtled to the bottom of the well, eight hundred feet deep in the shale-clay-rock epidermis of the earth.

A breath-taking bump and crash jarred the earth for a mile around as the tools struck bottom. Coil after coil of steel drilling-cable unspooled from the bull-wheel shaft and piled up on the floor. One rippling snarl in the line shot aloft toward the spinning crown pulley. There came a minor jolt as the line jumped the sheave and jammed; a sharp report, as from a toy pistol, and the two jagged halves of the crown pulley dropped ninety feet to the drilling floor. One eighty-pound chunk of the pulley hit the up-reared end of the walking-beam and ripped a splinter as big as a piano leg

Boulder

A graphic and swift-moving story of the oil-fields and the men who make them hum.

from its top. The other chunk spatted into the oak planking of the floor, within six inches of the unconscious Boulder's head.

"Peanuts" Barton, the tool-dresser, had centered the crank pin that operated the walking-beam, and had just stepped clear of the door, when the brake band let go. The piano-leg splinter off the beam slapped him on the shoulder and knocked him from the runway between the derrick floor and the engine. Scrambling out of a pile of mud, and rushing into the derrick, Peanuts threw a pail of water over the smoking stanchion bearings—care of equipment comes first in the oil-fields. Only then did he dip another pail from the barrel, and dash it over the motionless Boulder.

Boulder jerked shudderingly. The start of a groan welled in his throat, but changed to a gurgling snort as the dirty water ran into his gasping mouth. He sat up abruptly and stared around, still dazed. Quickly his brain cleared. His deep-set, reckless gray eyes noted the half of the crown pulley imbedded in the oak floor near where his head had been; then they turned speculatively to the derrick top. The thick fingers of his left hand reached up and tugged twistingly at his prominent Roman nose. His wide mouth snapped shut in a hard, straight line, and his lean jaw was thrust out stubbornly.

"There y're, Peanuts," he declared. "That proves it! I told Old Man Boyle, the last time he was here, that my crown pulley was weak. *H-m-m-m!* Ouch!" He winced with the pain in his battered head and shoulders as he rose to his lean six-foot height. "Durn the luck!" he continued, leaning back against the Samson post on which the great walking-beam was saddled. "Reckon I'd better quit drillin', Peanuts, an' get me a job pushin'

Catches a Torpedo

By FRANK
KNOX HOCKMAN

Illustrated by Grattan Condon

a nice shiny wheelbarrow. I'll prob'ly get canned, anyhow. Even Pop Boyle'll have a hard time overlookin' *this* mess. Me'n' hard luck's twins!"

It certainly looked as though Boulder's claim to lugubrious relationship was well founded. For two years after he came to us he had proceeded like a house afire, making record after record for footage. From the moment the well was spudded and actual drilling began, you could rely on Boulder Hackett's string to set the pace for the rest of the drillers to follow. But when we moved back to the Cold Creek lease, to develop a new pool a wildcatter had unexpectedly discovered in the oldest oil-field known, Boulder's star seemed to wane. Somehow, he just couldn't seem to get going, there.

One accident after another happened on his well. He smashed equipment, ruined tools, and spoiled things generally. This crash was the fourth major mishap that had occurred on his well within a month. Aside from the actual damage done, it was a costly matter too, for with the best of luck it would be a week before operations could be resumed. Yes, even Pop Boyle would have a hard time overlooking the present crash, and Boulder knew from experience that Pop was a first-class overlooker.

POP BOYLE—the Big Boss—had started out in life, so far as we knew any of his history, as a mule-skinner in the oil-fields. The fifty years before that didn't count, anyhow. He had picked up a few leases, when leases were easy to get, and one fine day a well on one of those leases bore him a gusher. Six or eight more followed rapidly, and in no time at all Pop found himself pitchforked from the Skinner class into the millionaire class. But he still continued to be Pop Boyle.



Pop sensed unusual conditions as mysteriously as a buzzard senses potential banquets. He often missed paying us a visit when we had some pleasant surprise to spring on him; but let trouble of any kind occur—more particularly the kind that might have been avoided—and Pop was bound to come soaring in, to add his startlingly profane vocabulary to our earnest but more modest reaction to existing circumstances.

It so happened that Pop was in the field-office shack with me when the news of Boulder Hackett's latest mishap came in, and he immediately began the bark that would temper the severity of his bite.

"Anybody hurt?" he asked quickly, and when assured that both Boulder and Peanuts were alive and uninjured, he turned his sharp old face to me. His scraggly gray mustache stuck out like the quills on an angry porcupine. Shaggy tufts of eyebrow bristled above his clear blue eyes. His chin came up until it almost touched the end of his long sharp nose.

"There!" he shrilled. "There y're! Give a man all the breaks on earth, an'



The top of the torpedo loomed two feet above his head. With solemn tread he carried his dangerous burden to the truck.

he turns right around an' ruins a whole dasted outfit. Dang his ornery, awkward hide! By the twisted tail of Jenny, I'll go out there an' beat some sense into his fool head, so I will! C'mon!"

For the first two miles of our drive out to Number One, Pop fulminated strongly. In the next mile he punctuated his cussing with grunts and snorts. During the last two miles he rode in glum silence. Finally, without a word, he crawled from the car and strutted across the hundred feet between the road and the rig.

A dozen roustabouts were gathered at the well. By the time we arrived, the loose cable had been re-spooled on the bull-wheel spindle and a new crown pulley was being set on the crown block. Boulder and Peanuts were drilling new holes in the broken end of the bull-wheel brake band, preparatory to putting it back in place.

Pop crossed the derrick floor toward Boulder in the manner of a "good little man" crossing a prize-ring to anticipate the rush of a heavier opponent. He stopped, jerked his hat down over one eye and spread his feet apart. He leaned down, presumably to shout the first blast of his disapproval close to Boulder's ear. Then he started as if in surprise, leaned farther down, and clasped his hand on the dejected shoulder of Boulder, who had ceased drilling and now sat motionless, waiting for the storm to break.

"By the soul of Drake!" Pop swore heartily. "I'm glad to see you're not killed! There's a rust streak on the broken face of that brake band that shows it's been split for some time. It wasn't your fault, Boulder, an'— *He-e-e-e-ey!* Whereinell's the rig-buildin' crew that put this rig up? Where they at? Take me to 'em! I'll fire the whole kit an' caboodle of 'em for puttin' a split brake band on a bull-wheel. C'mon!"

Two minutes later we were back in the car, headed for a point eight miles distant, where the same rig-building crew that had erected Number One rig was working on Number Nine. We had covered less than a mile, however, when Pop laid his hand on my knee. He was smiling quietly to himself.

"Swing back to the office, son," he directed. "Never mind those rig builders. Can't never save spilt milk by turnin' it sour. We'll just forget this mess—check it off against Boulder's old profits. I've got an idea." His lids drooped until his eyes were mere speculative slits. "I've got an idea that this smash has busted Boulder's streak of hard luck, mebby. We'll see."

God bless his old heart! Once more he had barked himself out, then had shown his real sporting blood. Boulder Hackett was to have another chance. But I, who had seen that speculative gleam in Pop's eyes, should have realized that he was not going to leave it all up to chance.

"Do your best to recover that string of tools," he directed, just before leaving the lease. "Let Boulder do the fishin'. If you don't get 'em in a week, pull the casin' an' start a new hole. An' don't worry none about Boulder, son. Just keep an eye on him, an' let me know how he's doin'. I've an idea he'll come through."

The next three days were busy ones for me. Aside from keeping in general touch with Number One, to see that the fishing job went forward as speedily as possible, Number Two held my interest, for Number Two drilled in. After shooting it with twenty quarts of nitroglycerin and putting the pumps to work, it was definitely established that we had a hundred-barrel well. Good enough in itself—an excellent thing, in fact. But I had held the optimistic opinion, after a study of the geologist's report, that Number Two would tap the main reservoir of the pool we were drilling. It was a bit discouraging to get only a hundred-barrel pumper. In disgust I turned my hopes

to Number Three, the next most likely place for tapping the main artery.

The Cold Creek lease was a combination of leases, which, taken together, covered a strip of territory a bit over thirty miles long, varying from a half-mile to three miles wide, and running in a northeast-southwest line—the line followed by oil pools in that particular section. When we moved in to begin operations, we located our supply-and-equipment base at almost the center of the lease, the most accessible point from our nearest rail connection. Then, too, according to the first rough survey of conditions, this point was established as being very close to the heart of the pool. The first well to start—Number One—was five miles southwest of the plant, the intention being to drill everything at mile intervals northeast of that, then drop back and drill to the southwest. The geological report indicated that the main pool was a great subterranean bubble, something over a mile long, so Number One well was spotted at the extreme southwestern theoretical limit of its boundary, Number Three at the extreme northeast limit, and Number Two halfway between One and Three, presumably at "big pay."

Meantime, Boulder Hackett seemed to have hit an unexpected streak of good fortune in righting the damage done by the smash-up. His very first attempt to grapple the runaway string of tools proved successful, and by the end of the third day the lost string was pulled slowly from the mouth of the casing.

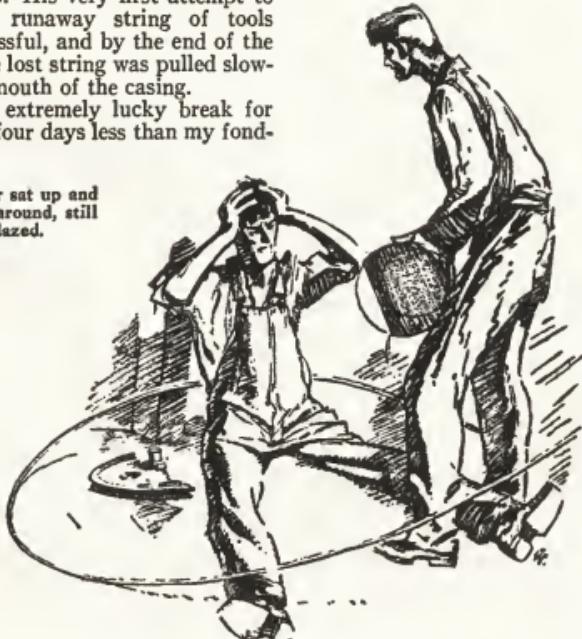
It was an extremely lucky break for Boulder. In four days less than my fond-

est hopes had anticipated, Number One was again ready to operate. It was a wonderful stroke of good fortune, if it hadn't been for the fact that some queer thing had happened to Boulder Hackett. He seemed to be fundamentally changed. Every move he made was extreme in its caution. He drove so straight on the lines of careful safety that Peanuts was led to express his disgust.

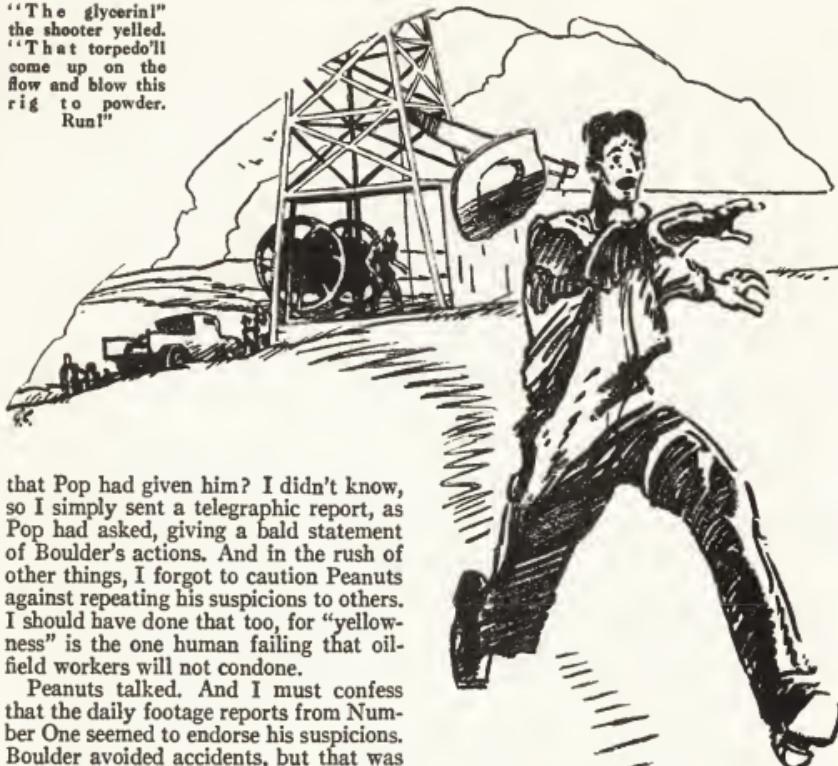
"Huh!" Peanuts snorted to me the day after drilling was resumed. "Boulder must o' got scared by that wham he took again the headache post. He aint got no nerve a-tall any more! He takes ten minutes to run the tools down eight hundred feet, an' he don't never step away from the screw f'r one minute. Danged if I don't b'lieve he's went an' turned yellow! Why, he even shut down this mornin' an' come out to the boiler an' gimme blazes f'r tyin' down the safety-valve. That aint like Boulder usta was!"

No, Boulder wasn't like he used to be. He had grown gaunt from the strain he labored under. The reckless air that had been a characteristic part of him was replaced by tense care and watchfulness. But was it cowardice that moved him, as Peanuts seemed to think, or was it a deep desire to justify this last chance

Boulder sat up and stared around, still dazed.



"The glycerin!"
the shooter yelled.
"That torpedo'll
come up on the
flow and blow this
rig to powder.
Run!"



that Pop had given him? I didn't know, so I simply sent a telegraphic report, as Pop had asked, giving a bald statement of Boulder's actions. And in the rush of other things, I forgot to caution Peanuts against repeating his suspicions to others. I should have done that too, for "yellowness" is the one human failing that oil-field workers will not condone.

Peanuts talked. And I must confess that the daily footage reports from Number One seemed to endorse his suspicions. Boulder avoided accidents, but that was about all he did. Number One barely moved. In less than a week Boulder was the laughingstock of the lease—the object of ridicule and coarse jest. Right to his face, different crew members made thinly veiled remarks that, a month before, would have started sanguinary battle. Boulder went white under some of their taunts, but failed to resent them.

. . . Then came some startling news.

Pop Boyle, the man who gave a fellow a chance, no matter what it cost, was on the verge of bankruptcy. The word came to me in a long-distance call from Pittsburgh. My direct superior, the General Super, informed me privately that Pop's affairs were in a critical condition, and intimated that his financial survival depended almost entirely on the results we got at Cold Creek.

"Speed up!" the General Super instructed me. "Notify all your crews that they've got to hit the ball. Needless to say, this information is not to be made public, but you can impress everyone with the urgent need for speed. And be prepared for a crash, unless Cold Creek shows big—and soon. High-ball, Bob!"

"Pop—how's he taking it?" I asked.
"Bad—damn' bad! He's pinning his
faith on you fellows out there, though.
He wants you to make a special appeal
to the driller, Hackett, for speed on his
behalf."

It was unnecessary for me to stir up the crews. I was astounded to find that news of Pop's predicament was already common knowledge to them. They had it, and they had it right. It simplified and emphasized my appeal for speed. And their response was an epic demonstration of loyalty, some of it apparent right at the time, some of it shown vividly later.

When I reached Number One on my rounds, I found Boulder squatted on the drilling-stool, his eyes intent on the churning screw. His face was deeply seamed with lines of care and worry. Even his big nose seemed pinched and shrunken. The eyes he turned to me were misery-clouded. He swallowed nervously.

"Yeah," he said in answer to my announcement and my special appeal to

him, "I heard about Pop's hard luck. An' I'm doin' my damnedest, too. But somehow things just don't seem to—I dunno. Gawd! If I could on'y get this well down 'thout no more smash-ups!"

It was either a strong man's prayer or the craven, selfish utterance of a fear-ridden failure. Peanuts, who was standing close by and who overheard, snorted contemptuously and glanced meaningly at me. Personally, I couldn't deny Peanuts' evident thought.

Back at the office, I found a telegram waiting for me. It was from Pop himself. "*Rush information probable date completion One and Three,*" it read. Things must be at a low ebb when Pop stayed within the ten-word limit on a telegram!

I wired immediately, setting the date for Three at ten days from then, and for One at twelve days. This wire I shot back through the regular company account. Then I wrote another one of two hundred words, packed full of confidence and cheer. This second wire I marked "Personal," and paid for out of my own pocket....

And now I spent every possible moment at Number Three. There lay my hope. I haunted the place. In the samples of sand the bailer brought from the bottom of the well, I read rainbow colors that indicated oil in quantities sufficient to fix up everything. I fluctuated between hope and desire and good judgment—between confidence and despair. My heart was so set on a gigantic success at Number Three that I could close my eyes and see vast pools of rippling oil covering the ground all around her. I even seriously contemplated a collection of big tanks at the site. When the drill bit into "pay sand," interest was so intense that every loose man on the lease was there. The sand was thick and soft and rotten. It looked good....

But in its own good time Number Three shot in as less than a fifty-barrel pumper.

We were all terribly disappointed. Wild Bill Cardeff went berserk. He licked two of the casing-crew, chased out of the rig the torpedo-man who had shot the well, then jumped Mike Morrissey, his tool-dresser, and it took eight of us to pull them apart. Angus MacGregor, the dour-faced foreman of the casing-crew, actually had tears in his eyes. And "Devil Joe" Grinstead sat down on the engine block and cursed steadily for a solid hour. I don't believe I ever had a harder duty

to perform than writing the telegraphic report on Number Three, that night.

Then the following afternoon, who should show up at the lease but Pop Boyle! He came in a hired car from Lippett, our nearest railroad point. There wasn't much visible change in Pop—I don't know what I had expected. He was a bit grimmer, a lot quieter, and he seemed preoccupied. He spent an hour looking over the footage reports, then leaned back in his chair, and shook his head sorrowfully.

"So Boulder Hackett didn't snap out of it, eh?" he remarked finally. "Too bad! Too bad!"

That gave me a chance to blow off some of my repressed emotions. What I didn't call Boulder Hackett wouldn't have started a fight in a water-front dive. Pop listened intently.

"Yellow, eh?" he asked. "Well, I'd never have suspected Boulder of bein' yellow. From what you say, though, I guess it's so. Ho-hum! S'pose we'll have to let him go, after he finishes this well."

"Why not make it right away?" I suggested. "He ought to be kicked out of the fields, the yellow cur!"

"Nope. Number One should drill in before mornin', an' by the time Boulder comes on tower at noon everything should be ready for the shot. We'll let him handle the rig durin' the shootin', an' have him clean out the hole afterwards. No use in wastin' a real driller's time with that kind of stuff, when we got a fellow like him to use. An' I'm still hopin'. Damn it, son, Boulder Hackett's been a dang' good man!"

SHORTLY after noon the next day, Pop Boyle and I reached Number One. Everything was in readiness for the shot. The torpedo-man was on the job. His five one-gallon cans of nitroglycerin were hung in a barrel of hot water, near the boiler, and Peanuts stood guard over them. The torpedo, four inches in diameter and six feet long, was suspended in the hole from a light pulley that was lashed to the drilling stem. The top of the torpedo was eighteen inches above the level of the floor, hung by a short open hook that ran under the torpedo's bail. Boulder was sitting hunched on the "lazy bench," talking to the shooter, who was loafing away the few minutes until his explosive became thoroughly heated.

Boulder nodded dispiritedly as Pop and I entered the rig, then sat in gloomy silence.

In a few moments, the shooter rose from his seat and walked boilerward for his first can of explosive. Pop and I immediately vacated the rig. That's the sensible thing to do when a shooter is at work! We walked a hundred feet, then turned to look back at the well. Pop gave an exclamation of impatience.

"That darn' fool Boulder must have lost *all* his wits," he growled. "What's wrong with the jackass, anyhow?"

The sheeting and roofing that had enclosed the drilling floor had been removed. The well had been stripped bare in preparation for the shot. From where we stood we could plainly see everything that took place on the floor. The shooter was on one knee beside the hole, intent on his work of pouring the first can of nitroglycerin into the torpedo. Boulder still sat where we had left him, elbows on knees, chin resting on his clasped hands, somber eyes staring at the floor. He never moved while can after can of the deadly liquid was carefully filled into the torpedo, and while the shot was lowered to the bottom.

As soon as the torpedo rested on bottom, the shooter removed his cans and all equipment to his truck, two hundred feet away. Then he returned to the well carrying the squib—a miniature torpedo made of two sticks of dynamite with fuse attached—that was intended to detonate the nitroglycerin, far below. The shooter spoke to Boulder, who rose heavily to his feet, stretched, and stood watching the shooter as the latter pulled a box of safety-matches from his pocket.

Suddenly both Boulder and the shooter turned startled faces to the casing mouth. From the hole there came a sound—indescribable, but unmistakable, even to a tyro. It was as though some mighty being, long imprisoned, suddenly grunted in surprise at finding an open way to freedom. Blended with the grunt, and more ominous by far—clear and distinct even to us, a hundred feet away—came a gurgling, choking cough such as an overheavy sleeper gives when waking and flexing stiffened muscles.

Boulder HACKETT leaned forward tensely, a look of surprise on his face—a look of wonder and of exultation. He snatched the squib from the shooter's hands and threw it out into the soft muck of the sand pumpings. Then he dropped to one knee beside the casing mouth and listened intently.

"The glycerin! The glycerin!" the

shooter yelled. "That torpedo'll come up on the flow, an' blow this rig to powder. *Run!*" Swinging on his heel, he sprinted from the derrick. And so deeply was he impressed with the need for haste that he ran directly away from his truck. Pop and I, infected by the shooter's panic, started to follow him.

But I hadn't taken ten steps when I felt Pop's hand on my arm. We stopped and turned to look back at the well.

Boulder was still in the derrick. He stood beside the casing mouth, his face set in a white mask. But his shoulders no longer sagged. His head was up. A little shudder ran along my spine at the thought of what was about to happen. It looked as though Boulder's streak of hard luck was tempered by his tapping of the main reservoir of the pool—but the hard luck still held. That torpedo would float up on the crest of the imminent flow, impelled by the unknown forces behind it; it would rear its ugly head from the casing, topple over, crash to the floor. The resulting explosion would demolish the rig, tear a hole in the ground that would turn potential good fortune, and financial salvation for Pop, into ruin and devastation—irrecoverable, final! Undoubtedly Boulder, realizing this, had determined to let the catastrophe include him. While we watched, he threw his clenched fists into the air and shook them violently. He stamped one foot angrily on the floor, then kicked the casing mouth savagely, as though gone mad.

"Come out of that, you fool!" Pop shrilled, cupping his hands around his mouth. "Come out of that, Boulder!"

Boulder swept one arm in our direction—a gesture reckless and final. As his arm swept above the hole, a gout of stinking, greasy water and oil jetted from the casing and drenched it. It was now only a matter of seconds before the full force of the well would spout. The noise of its working, down there in the earth, increased in volume. Hoarse murmurings and thick, animal-like belchings rumbled from the casing. Jet after jet of dirty fluid spurted to a height of twelve feet and fell back, soaking Boulder to the skin. Water and grease poured from the tall driller in streams. His clothes were plastered tightly to his lean body, outlining the tense rigidity of his shoulders, legs and torso.

Suddenly, with a great gurgling snort, a column of pure oil shot from the casing. For fifteen feet it pushed upward in

a solid pile, then fanned out and cascaded back to the floor. And now Boulder's arms were extended before him. His whole weight leaned against the thrust of that oil column; he buried his hands in its viscid, gleaming heart. Great spurts of oil shot backward beneath his elbows that were interrupting the flow. His clenched white teeth gleamed from his oil-drenched, unrecognizable face.

"Great God!"

Beside me, Pop was jumping up and down in an agony of suspense. "He's going to try to catch that torpedo!" he choked. "And all because he thinks he's saving my financial gizzard. Why in hell was I crazy enough to send out that fake report, just to jolt the fool!"

Then it all came to me in a flash—but now the scheme had developed into something too big for Pop.

I had no time right then for anything but concentration on what was happening there on the drilling floor. My heart was pounding so hard that it hurt. I don't believe I breathed.

And then I saw the torpedo. Slowly, with the sluggish, weaving squirm of a water-moccasin coming to the surface, the white cylinder rose from the hole. A foot—two feet—three—it moved steadily upward. Not fast, but smoothly—craftily! Now it had reached the level of Boulder's groping hands. Then still up and up, past him—Had it gone by, unfelt? Boulder was blinded, of course. For a second my brain reeled. I waited for the explosion—for chaos. But it didn't come. Those groping fingers *had* felt the rising torpedo! Coolly, calculatingly, Boulder allowed the smooth metal sides of the terrible monster to slide through his hands. But now they closed with the thing in a soft, slow grip that was not to be denied. The muscles of Boulder's back and shoulders heaved up in great ridges; he began to back blindly away from the caving mouth.

Presently Boulder stepped clear of the oil fountain. One arm, wrapped around the ominous cylinder, hugged it tightly to his side; the other wiped futilely at the blinding oil. How Peanuts got there I don't know, but suddenly he was at Boulder's side. With one twist, he tore loose the short piece of anchor tubing that dangled from the torpedo's bottom end.

"Steady, old man! Steady!" His voice crackled with anxiety. "All clear. Just hold tight until I get your eyes wiped clean." His bandanna proving too small for the job, Peanuts ripped his shirt free

and with this managed to clear Boulder's sight. For a second the driller stood motionless. His eyes turned upward to where the top of the torpedo loomed, two feet above his head. Slowly, carefully, his knees bending springily at each short step, he moved across the floor, like one who walks in his sleep.

With solemn, measured tread, Boulder crossed the space between the rig and the shooter's truck. I had the queer impression that he was walking at his own funeral. Beside him, hands opening and closing nervously as if waiting for the right moment to spring on the man he dogged, stalked Peanuts. Two hundred feet to the rear, our steps holding hypnotized cadence with Boulder's, Pop and I followed.

Boulder carried his dangerous burden directly to the truck, and eased it softly to the ground. The tapered end sank two inches into the soft mud, and Boulder leaned the body of the torpedo very gently against the right front fender, bracing it solidly against the lamp.

THEN watchfully, Boulder stepped clear. His lanky body straightened to its full height. He inflated his chest and exhaled the air with an enginelike exhaust. He stared at Peanuts for a second, then swung his hard fist solidly against that surprised individual's jaw. Stepping over the senseless tool-dresser, Boulder came striding to meet Pop. Once more the old light of reckless fearlessness shone from his eyes. His mouth curved upward in its old sardonic smile.

"There y're, Pop!" he announced in a great vibrant voice, his long arm swinging toward the gushing column of oil that the casing crew was even now battling to bring under control. "There's money in the bank for ye! I knowed damn' well that if we ever got 'er down she'd be a loo-loo. An' we've saved ye the price of that nitro, too! But 'scuse me: I've gotta look up a few more guys, like Peanuts yonder, that've been wise-crackin' around here lately."

A moment later his flivver broke into a thunderous roar and streaked along the road toward the bunk-house, in a cloud of swirling dust. Pop stood watching the departing cloud, his mouth open, his eyes agleam. Then he turned to me.

"Son," he warned me softly, "if you ever let Boulder Hackett find out that he *didn't* save my financial hide—so help me Drake, I'll come back an' ha'nt you after I'm dead!"



The Man in the

The gifted author of "The Damned Thing" here gives us a tremendously exciting novelle based on a puzzling and deadly vendetta waged against a great city's police department.

"GOODNIGHT, Grandpa," the desk-sergeant called as a burly figure passed in the direction of the street door. "Have a good time—and be sure to shave close and gargle with carbolic acid before you kiss the new grandson."

Detective Captain Daniel Phalen, familiarly known as "Bullet-proof Dan," paused and thumbed his nose at the desk-sergeant. "Lock yourself up until I get back," he advised. "Some light-fingered bird is liable to swipe your shield while I'm not watching."

The bluff desk-sergeant laughed, and watched the huge form of the grizzled detective captain disappear through the street door. Bullet-proof Dan was a veteran of the department, and his nickname had been evolved from the fact that he seemed to be armored against the lead of the lawless element to whom he had for years been Nemesis. His record with the department was long and glorious. The Big House up the river could credit Phalen with having sent it more boarders for long stays than any other one man among New York's officers. Gangland knew Bullet-proof Dan as absolutely incorruptible. Nearly a score of leaders of greater or lesser mobs who had put the big detective on the spot were now packed down in earth—their names and deeds being rapidly forgotten while Dan Phalen remained to bring grief and justice to others of their kind.

Phalen crossed the sidewalk and climbed into his parked roadster. It was

just a few minutes past midnight. Two detectives were standing at the curb talking, loath to go inside out of the fine autumn night air after returning from their lunch.

"So long, Dan," called one of the pair. "Don't let the kid play with your handcuffs. He might turn out to be a cop."

"So might yerself," retorted Phalen with a touch of the brogue.

"I might, at that," laughed the other. "I suppose you'll be off for Albany bright and early in the morning?"

"I'm off right now," replied Phalen as he started the motor. "'Tis with me wife and the rest I'll be havin' breakfast."

The roadster moved away up the street. Dan Phalen was on his way to Albany to have his first look at his first grandchild. His wife had been in the capital for more than two weeks, and with the coming of a wire from her informing him that their daughter had given birth to a child which would be named Dan, the big captain had taken a week off.

SHORTLY after two o'clock the following afternoon Jimmy Coulter, veteran and star reporter of the *Morning Record* staff, entered the news-room and headed toward his desk in a far corner. Midway of the big room he halted as he heard his name called in the gruff tones of Lee Bryant, city editor. A moment later Jimmy was standing before the city desk.

"Bullet-proof Dan Phalen disappeared last night," said Bryant as he handed the reporter a folded sheet of copy-paper. "Nobody knows what happened to him, but it looks as if some of his gangster friends may have finally reached a soft spot with a bullet."

"If they did," replied Jimmy Coulter, "It is just too bad for Dan, because the

Scarlet Mask

By SEVEN ANDERTON

Illustrated by Joseph Maturo

only soft spot in that big carcass of his is his heart. But Dan has been asking for it for a long time. Any particular gorilla suspected?"

Jimmy's face had taken on a hard look. During his seven years of working with the police on behalf of his paper, the reporter and the big detective captain had become close friends.

"All the available information is on that memo in your hand, bozo," snapped the city editor. "Read it and get busy. I want a story for the early street edition—and a good one."

"Folks in hell want water," grinned the reporter.

Before Bryant could retort, Coulter had turned away and was heading toward his own desk. Dropping into the swivel chair before his littered desk, Jimmy scanned the memorandum which Bryant had given him. It read:

Bullet-proof Dan Phalen left Headquarters in his roadster last night, declaring his intention of driving to Albany for breakfast. He had wired his wife in Albany to expect him. Phalen's only child, Mrs. George Partridge, living in Albany, has recently become the mother of a son. Phalen had taken a week's vacation to visit. At nine this morning Mrs. Phalen telephoned Headquarters to ask what was keeping Dan. At ten-thirty this morning Dan's car was found parked in front of a fire-plug on 69th Street. No trace of Phalen. Check up. Turn in story for early edition. Work in Dan's past record.

Coulter glanced up at the clock on the wall. It was now two-thirty. He picked up the telephone on his desk and called Detective Headquarters. After a few minutes of conversation over the wire he put the instrument down, made a notation on the memorandum and thrust it into his pocket. He produced a cigarette, lighted it and sat for some time



puffing thoughtfully. Then he rose abruptly and left the office.

Two hours later he was back at his desk, scanning a three-days-old copy of the *Record* which he had ordered a copy-boy to fetch. Presently he tore a bit from an inside page and carefully read the story printed thereon.

VETERAN OFFICER DISAPPEARS FROM SUBURBAN BEAT

Officer Thomas P. Harper, patrolman on duty in the exclusive Halewood section, disappeared last night. The officer rang in from a patrol-box at the corner of Gregg Street and Bent Road at one o'clock A. M. He was not heard from afterward. Investigating officers found no trace of Harper. The search is being continued.

COULTER rose, crossed the room and laid the clipping on the city desk before Lee Bryant. The city editor glanced at it and then raised his eyes to meet Coulter's.

"Well," demanded Bryant, "what's on the thing you call a mind?"

"The dicks," answered the reporter, "found a note on the floor of Dan Phalen's car this morning. It was printed in pencil, on plain, cheap paper. It said: 'PHALEN HAS GONE TO PAY.' That was all. Just five words."

"Yeah?" said the city editor. "And where does this come in?" He tapped the clipping in front of him with a blunt forefinger.



A girl who had been at a desk not far from the center of the explosion was unconscious but alive.

"Yesterday," answered Coulter, "Chief of Police Naylor received a note through the mail. It was printed in pencil on the same paper as the one found in Phalen's car. It consisted of just five words: 'HARPER HAS GONE TO PAY.'"

"So," nodded Bryant, "you figure that the same party is responsible for both jobs."

"Quite so, Watson," grinned the reporter. "Your deductive powers are truly astonishing."

"Go to hell," grunted Bryant. "And get busy. I want this story for the early edition."

THE early edition—and all subsequent editions for the day—carried a story under Jimmy Coulter's name. Hot news being scarce, the story was given a front-page play. By morning the entire city was aware that a policeman and a famous detective had disappeared under mysterious circumstances. All the details were told in Jimmy Coulter's own vivid style, and the readers were promised immediate reports on further developments.

It was just a bit after two o'clock the following afternoon when Jimmy Coulter

arrived at the office. The girl at the information-desk handed him a letter.

"A messenger-boy brought this about two hours ago, Mr. Coulter," said the girl. "It is marked personal."

"Thanks," said Coulter. He tore open the plain, cheap envelope and read:

COULTER:

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE MORE SENSE THAN TO MONKEY IN THE BUSINESS YOU WROTE ABOUT YESTERDAY. THIS IS ALL THE TIME I WILL TELL YOU TO LAY OFF. YOU ARE THE ONE GUY I DON'T WANT MONKEYING WITH MY BUSINESS. LAY OFF. IF YOU DON'T I WILL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.

Jimmy read the pencil-printed message a second time. He made a mental note of the fact that it had been printed by the same hand on the same paper as had the two notes concerning Detective Phalen and Patrolman Harper. Then, shrugging his wide bony shoulders, the reporter walked across the room and tossed the message onto the desk before his city editor.

Lee Bryant read the penciled words and then looked up at Coulter. "Swell!" grunted the editor. "This gives me something to splash in the early edition. You

are now assigned to this job exclusively. I'll show this bird that he can't scare the *Record*."

"Kind-hearted guy, aint you?" The reporter grinned. "And brave! Maybe you didn't notice that the little *billet-doux* is not addressed to the *Record*."

"On your way, cub," retorted Bryant. "I'm giving you your big chance. Didn't you ever see a movie? Dash out and find the bad, bad villain and drag him into the office feet first—just as the bulldog is going to press. Now beat it. I've got to get busy and make a hero out of you—and that is one damned tough job."

Coulter turned away toward his desk, and the city editor bawled for a copy-boy.

"Take that to the art department," ordered Bryant, handing the threatening letter to the boy who answered his summons. "Tell them I said to stop everything else until they give me a facsimile of it."

In the early street edition of the *Record* the facsimile appeared, and underneath it in large type the following:

The above message was sent to James F. Coulter, intrepid reporter of the *Record*, by the party responsible for whatever has happened to Patrolman Thomas Harper and Detective Daniel Phalen, both of whom have mysteriously disappeared.

Needless to say, the *Record*, represented by its Mr. Coulter, will continue to report the news concerning the mysterious disappearances of the two officers fully and faithfully. Mr. Coulter, with the *Record's* resources entirely at his command, will devote his entire time and talent to the case until the person who wrote the above letter is apprehended and the mystery is solved.

WHEN Jimmy Coulter came into the office late that night to write his story for the final edition, he was naturally subjected to the royal razz by the other old-timers of the staff. A clipping of the facsimile and the editorial blurb beneath it lay on his desk, encircled by a wreath of paper flowers. He took the razzing with a grin and batted out his yarn. As he laid the typed pages on the city desk, he bent close to Lee Bryant's ear and growled:

"One more stunt like that, you bald-headed ape, and the boss will be looking for somebody to keep this desk from being vacant."

"Yeah?" retorted the city editor. "Maybe this one will be all that's need-

ed to encourage this note-writing body-snatcher to the point where I'll be able to use your salary to hire a good reporter. I notice you haven't even found one of the missing officers—to say nothing of the party who removed them from our midst."

"Keep your shirt on, *Simon Legree*," advised Jimmy. "Don't rush the intrepid reporter who will devote his—"

"Get out," cut in Bryant. "I'm busy. Have some results for me tomorrow, or I'll put a copy-boy on the job and send you to cover the business meeting of the W. C. T. U."

Bryant's phone rang. As the city editor picked up the instrument, Jimmy turned back toward his own desk. He had taken but a few steps when the editor's voice halted him:

"Somebody wants you, Coulter. It's a blonde voice."

The reporter turned back and took the telephone from Bryant's hands.

"Hello—Mr. Coulter?" came a feminine voice in answer to his own.

"Yes."

"This is Mrs. Dan Phalen," said the voice. "I've been trying to get you for several hours. I know that you are a good friend of Dan's, and he has told me that you are a better detective than there is on the force. I wonder if you would come over to our apartment? I have something to show you. Perhaps it may be of some help in finding Dan. I was going to turn it over to the detectives, and then I saw the piece in the *Record*, and remembered what Dan had told me about you."

"Certainly, Mrs. Phalen," answered the reporter. "I'll come over at once. What is your address?"

Mrs. Phalen told him. Jimmy thanked her and put down the phone.

"That was Dan's wife," he told the city editor. "Wants to tell me something. See you in church."

MR. PHALEN was a little woman with a ruddy, plump face and hair almost white. Trouble clouded her eyes, and her face was as nearly haggard as that type of face can be, as she admitted Coulter to her apartment.

"What I want to show you, Mr. Coulter," she said after she had led the way into the comfortable living-room, "is a letter. Do you remember when Dan and the emergency-squad chased the Sandillo gang down the harbor and threw a bomb into the gangsters' launch?"

"I do," answered Jimmy. "And a good job it was—blowing up that launch and wiping out that bunch of rats. Dan should have been retired on full pay for that job."

"This letter I'm going to show you," went on Mrs. Phalen, "came about two weeks after that happened. I was in bed one night when there was a knock on the door. I got up and went to answer, but there was nobody there. Then I saw the letter on the floor, where it had been pushed under the door. There was no address on the envelope, so I opened it, and—but wait a minute, and I'll get it."

She went across the room, opened the drawer of a desk and took out two pieces of paper which she brought and placed in Jimmy's hand.

"It is torn in two," she explained to the reporter. "Dan tore it and threw it in the waste-basket after I showed it to him when he came home. I don't know why, but I took it out of the basket the next day and saved it for my scrapbook of clippings about Dan. Tonight I saw in the paper that picture of the note that had been sent to you. I thought that the printing looks nearly the same on both of them."

Coulter unfolded the two halves of the sheet Mrs. Phalen had given him and fitted them together by flattening them on a table in the center of the room. The penciled message read:

PHALEN—

PRETTY SOON I WILL MAKE YOU PAY. I AM NOT GOING TO KILL YOU, BUT YOU WILL WISH ALL THE TIME YOU LIVE THAT YOU HAD DIED. YOU WILL WISH THAT YOU HAD NEVER BEEN A COP OR MONKEYED WITH TONY SANDILLO. I WILL FIX YOU SO THAT YOUR WIFE WILL HATE YOU. YOU WILL KNOW WHO I AM AFTER I HAVE FIXED YOU.

There was no signature. Coulter read the note over a second time. Then he looked up as Mrs. Phalen placed a folded copy of the *Record* on the table before him. The paper was folded so that the facsimile of the note he had received was readily readable.

"Is the printing the same," asked Dan's wife, "or do I imagine it?"

"No doubt about it," answered the reporter after comparing the two notes. "The same man printed both of these notes. It doesn't take a handwriting expert to see that. Not only the printing, but the phraseology shows it. It looks as if some friend of Sandillo's might be

trying to avenge that dirty rat. But I can't think who it might be. The bunch that were wiped out when Dan tossed that grenade into Sandillo's launch were the last of the Sandillo mob."

"Sandillo's body was never found, if you remember," Mrs. Phalen observed. "There was also another which was not found—Angelo Gatti."

"That's true." Jimmy nodded thoughtfully.

"Oh, Mr. Coulter," cried the woman, tears suddenly brimming in her eyes, "forgive me, but I am so terribly worried! I feel that something terrible has happened to Dan—or is going to happen to him. Perhaps Sandillo was not killed with the rest. Perhaps it was he who did something to Dan. Please, please, do something!"

"I'll do all I can, Mrs. Phalen," Jimmy assured her. "This note you have shown me may help. I'm going back to the *Record* office and look up some things before I sleep. I'll keep in touch with you by telephone."

"Please do that," said Mrs. Phalen, drying her tears. "I'm sorry I blubbered. Dan hates for me to cry. But—I love him so."

EXCEPT for the few men standing in the dog-watch, the *Record* offices were abandoned when Coulter returned to them after his visit to the Phalen apartment. The reporter exchanged a few gibes with the dog-watch crew, and then went to the reference-room, where he busied himself with the files. After half an hour had passed he discovered what he sought—a front-page story with a two-column black heading. It read:

SANDILLO GANG WIPE OUT IN HARBOR BATTLE WITH COPS

Finis has been written on the career of the Sandillo gang. Last night Patrolman Thomas P. Harper called for the emergency-squad after he had located Tony Sandillo and the badly wanted remnant of the desperate Sandillo mob in a dive near the waterfront on the lower West Side.

When the emergency-squad arrived and stormed the dive, Sandillo and his remaining henchmen broke from their cover and staged a running gun battle with the officers until they reached a near-by dock. There the gangsters boarded a motor launch and sped away down the harbor, evidently heading for Bermuda—where Tony Sandillo had often boasted that he meant to make his headquarters in the



The gun roared, but its lead went wild and was buried in the corridor wall.

event that he was ever driven from New York.

The pursuing officers commanded another launch which proved in the end to be more speedy than the one in which the gangsters had fled. Sandillo's craft was overtaken after a chase of some fifteen miles, and a grenade cast by Detective Captain Daniel Phalen (Bullet-proof Dan), caused the outlaw launch to blow up.

Six bodies were recovered after the explosion. Eight gangsters were known to have boarded the launch before it pulled away from the dock. Police say that the two bodies not found were those of Tony Sandillo and of Angelo Gatti, one of the gang leader's trusted lieutenants. Both of the unaccounted-for hoodlums were seen boarding the launch just before it pulled away from the dock. Police declare that Sandillo and Gatti could not possibly have survived the disaster, since all the recovered bodies had been terribly burned before having been left to the mercy of the water.

This means that the Sandillo mob is no more. Authorities on gangland declare that the territory formerly ruled by Sandillo will now be added to the already vast domain of Owney Madden.

The other members of the emergency squad led by Bullet-proof Dan Phalen were Jacob (Red Jake) Zerr, Samuel Nason, Peter J. Schmidt, Orville Paddock, Thomas Dwyer and Leonard Jones.

Jimmy Coulter read the story over twice. Then he produced his penknife and carefully removed it from the page. After carefully stowing the clipping in his pocket, he departed from the building and had a bite to eat at a restaurant. He reached his apartment in the west Seventies shortly after three in the morning. He was sitting on the side of his bed, unlacing a shoe, when his telephone rang. He barked an answer into the instrument. The voice of the night operator at Detective Headquarters came over the wire. Over a period of years Jimmy had had an arrangement made with that useful individual.

"Hello, Jimmy," said the operator has-

tily. "Jake Zerr seems to have disappeared. There was some sort of a rumpus over at his apartment. The landlady and the cop on the beat both called in. He lives on Seventy-first Street, not far from you. Some of the boys are on their way up there now. His number is—"

"I know where Zerr lives," interrupted Jimmy. "Be there in a jiffy. Thanks for the call."

Snapping the receiver onto the hook, Coulter snatched his coat from over the back of a chair, slapped his dilapidated hat onto his head and headed for the door without stopping to retie the shoe he had started to remove. As he jerked the door open, to leave the apartment, he was brought to an abrupt halt by the muzzle of a gun which was thrust into his middle with such force as to bring a grunt from him.

The gun was in the hand of a tall figure in dark garments who had been standing in the hall facing the apartment door when it opened. The head of the figure was covered with a scarlet mask.

"Stand still, Coulter," came in menacing tones from behind the vivid material of the mask. "I heard you talking over the telephone. I was just going to leave a note under your door when the call came. Now I'll keep the note. I listened while you talked. You were going to Jake Zerr's apartment. I can tell you that there is no use. I only intended to tell you once about monkeying in my business. But I aint got nothing against you if you keep your nose out of my business. I aint afraid of the cops, but you are too smart a guy—and I aint got time to watch you. You better go to bed and quit worrying about what is going to happen to a bunch of lousy cops."

NOW there is something about the business end of a gun thrust against one's belly that makes even the bravest of men pause. Coulter had stood with half-raised hands while the masked individual was speaking and while he waited for the flesh on his back to cease crawling and the tightness in his throat to let go.

And then—he got a break: somewhere upstairs a door opened and the masked one involuntarily glanced over his shoulder. Promptly Jimmy grabbed the gun which was boring into his middle, and he thrust it violently aside. The gun roared, but its lead went wild and was buried in the wall of the corridor. Pressing his advantage, Jimmy sought to close with

the masked figure. The fellow, however, fought like a madman, and the reporter found his hands full. And then, from the corner of his eye, Jimmy caught sight of two other masked figures that had rushed up the stairs and were now evidently hastening to the aid of his opponent.

With a mighty effort Coulter sent the masked one reeling away along the corridor and spun on his heel to leap back into the safety of his apartment. He flung the door shut behind him and heard the spring lock click. Next moment a bullet tore through the closed door to bury itself in the plaster on the opposite side of the living-room. And the reporter realized that the foe could shoot the lock away and burst in upon him with little loss of time.

Stooping low, he dived for the door of his bedroom. Having gained that sanctuary, he darted to the open window and a moment later was going down the fire-escape with monkeylike agility. Jimmy's apartment was on the third floor of a walk-up apartment building. He made the ten-foot drop to the sidewalk and landed on his feet like a cat. A sprint took him to and around the nearest corner, and another block brought him to Columbus Avenue. There he jumped into a taxi.

THREE detectives from headquarters were on the scene when Jimmy arrived at Jake Zerr's apartment, but they had only been there a couple of minutes. Zerr, a bachelor and one of the crack men of the Department, lived on the third floor of an old brownstone front which had been remodeled into apartments. Zerr's fellow-officers were questioning the landlady, a dumpy Italian matron clad in a kimono. According to the landlady's story, Zerr had come home shortly before three o'clock. Happening to be awake, she had heard him enter his apartment, which was directly across the hall from her own. The sound of the door closing had no more than died away when she had heard the sound of a revolver-shot and something fell heavily on the floor. Gathering her courage the landlady had hurried down to the telephone in the ground-floor hall and called the police. She had turned from the telephone to hear a vigorous pounding on the front door and had admitted the policeman on the beat, who had heard the shot and hurried to investigate. The officer had dashed to the third floor and

admitted himself to Zerr's apartment with the landlady's pass-key. He found the apartment empty of anything human and hurried back to the telephone to amplify the woman's report to Headquarters.

Having heard the landlady's story, the sergeant in charge of the detectives sent the policeman down to guard the front door and entered Zerr's apartment, followed by his two aids and Jimmy Coulter. In the middle of the rug on the living-room floor lay a service revolver. The detective sergeant picked it up carefully and noted that one chamber had been fired.

"And there is where the bullet went," spoke up Coulter, pointing to a hole in the rug not far from where the gun had lain. There were powder-burns about the bullet-hole.

As the sergeant bent to examine the spot on the rug, Coulter picked up a bit of folded paper which lay less than a foot from the spot.

"Before you look at this," said the reporter, "I can tell you what you'll see. There will be five words printed with pencil: '*Zerr has gone to pay!*'"

The sergeant snatched the paper, unfolded it and after a brief glance lifted his eyes to glare at the reporter.

"How did you know?" demanded the sergeant.

"If I were to tell you all my secrets," chuckled Coulter, "you'd be a good detective."

"Smart, aint you?" growled the sergeant. "Maybe you can tell me what happened to Zerr?"

"Perhaps I can—presently," answered the reporter as he walked across the room toward a wide-open window. "Notice this rope?"

A new one-inch rope was tied fast to a radiator near the window. It hung over the sill and dangled downward.

"Wait until I slide down and have a look at the other end of this," said Coulter. "I may be able to enlighten you when I come up."

As he spoke the lanky reporter stepped to the window, placed the rope between his thighs and grasped it with both hands. He swung himself out into the darkness just as the deadly sputter of a machine-gun tore the silence. A flying slug jerked the disreputable felt hat from Jimmy's head as he started downward. The lead buried itself in the wall opposite; and the detectives in the room leaped back from the window.

Coulter slid down the dangling rope with a speed that burned his hands. Slugs from the sputtering gun spat-tered the brick wall about him. One of the missiles burned the calf of his leg. Then he felt the end of the rope pass through his fingers, and the next moment he was sprawled on the bricks with which the small rear yard was paved.

That rear yard was shared with the building directly opposite, and facing on the next street. It was from a rear window on the ground floor of the opposite building that the machine-gun was fired. As Coulter landed on the bricks, his long body uncoiled like a spring, and he rolled rapidly into the black shadow cast by a fence which divided the rear yard from its neighbor. A split second after the reporter had rolled away, the stream of lead from the machine-gun was tearing at the bricks in the spot where he had fallen. Then the bark of service revolvers began to sound from above. The detectives in Zerr's room, realizing that the blast from the machine-gun was being directed at Coulter, had leaped to the window and were firing at the flashes across the court which betrayed the location of the sputtering weapon. The crash and tinkle of glass told that the bullets from the detectives' guns were finding their mark. The machine-gun suddenly ceased firing.

IN the black shadow of the fence Coulter scrambled quickly to his feet. He too had seen the flash of the enemy gun. Feeling his way, he began moving with all possible speed toward the window whence it had come. There was the sound of footfalls on the concrete of the court, and a moment later the detective sergeant was at the reporter's side. The officer had slid down the dangling rope after emptying his gun at the hidden enemy.

"Take it easy, boy," grunted the sergeant at Jimmy's side. "Wait until I toss these in there!" A moment later two tear-gas bombs had been flung through the black rectangle that had been a window. The sergeant then produced a flashlight and shot its beam into the gas-filled room. The place was absolutely vacant. A door leading to a dimly lighted hallway stood open.

"They made their get-away!" growled the officer in disgust.

Together the pair retraced their steps across the court. Coulter took the elec-

tric torch from the sergeant's hand and inspected the end of the rope that dangled from Zerr's window.

"Cut clean—with a sharp knife," observed the sergeant.

"Right," agreed the reporter. "Now I can tell you what happened to Jake Zerr."

"I'm listening," declared the sergeant.

"Our friend who wears the mask and writes the notes," said Coulter, "was waiting in the apartment when Zerr came home. He most likely had his helpers along. He probably socked Zerr with a blackjack. While he was falling and before he had lost consciousness, Zerr drew his gun and fired it in an automatic gesture of self-defense. Then our mysterious friends, having everything ready, tied the rope around Zerr's body and lowered it out of the window. They then slid down after it, cut the rope and carried Zerr across the court to that open window in the rear of the other building. From there Zerr was taken God knows where."

"Sounds reasonable," nodded the sergeant after a few moments of study. "But God's knowing where Zerr is does no good. *We've* got to find out."

"I'm willing," said Coulter. "But I'm wondering how to go about it."

"Let's go up and have another look at the room," suggested the sergeant.

IT was shortly past two o'clock on the following afternoon when the telephone on Lee Bryant's desk rang. The city editor, who had reached the office nearly an hour before, answered the call and heard Jimmy Coulter's voice on the wire.

"Hello, Lee," said the reporter. "Find that story I left on your desk with the lead on Jake Zerr's disappearance?"

"I did," answered Bryant. "It was pretty bad, but—"

"Forget the wise-cracks," interrupted Jimmy. "Hold that yarn up for a new lead. What is left of Tom Harper, the cop who disappeared from his beat in Halewood, has just been found drifting down the Hudson in a rowboat. A tug picked up the boat and brought it ashore. The doctors are working on Harper over at Bellevue Hospital now. I'm sticking around. Harper can't talk—at least not yet. I'll call or come in with the dope later."

"What's the matter with Harper?" demanded the city editor. "Why can't he talk?"

"Burned," replied Coulter. "Face and neck, hands and forearms. Bad. Wonder he wasn't blinded."

"How?" queried Bryant. "What happened to him?"

"If I knew that," retorted the reporter, "it would be in the paper and on the street by now. I've told you all there is to tell, so far. I'll call you back." . . .

In an emergency operating-room at Bellevue, Patrolman Thomas Harper lay under an anesthetic and the care of two physicians and a nurse. He was terribly burned, as Jimmy Coulter had said. Two detectives were on guard at the door of the operating-room. They nodded to Coulter as he came back from telephoning.

"Was anything—a note or message of any kind—found in the boat with him?" inquired the reporter.

"Nope," answered one of the detectives.

"Why not take a look through his pockets?" suggested Jimmy, pointing to Harper's uniform and other garments, where they had been placed on a bench at the side of the room. "Seems like there should have been some sort of communication."

"What makes you think so?" asked the detective.

"Several things," replied Coulter. "The devil behind this business appears to have a letter-writing complex. Give Harper's pockets a frisk."

The detective stepped into the room and brought the wrinkled and soiled uniform out into the corridor, where he proceeded to search its pockets. The third, a side pocket of the coat, contained what the reporter had felt certain would be found—a message on a folded sheet of cheap paper and printed in pencil. It read:

HARPER HAS PAID. IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE HE IS ABLE TO TALK. EVEN THEN HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TELL WHO PUNISHED HIM—BECAUSE HE DOES NOT KNOW. WHEN MY WORK IS FINISHED, I WILL LET HIM AND ALL THE OTHERS KNOW WHOM TO THANK. OTHERWISE, MY REVENGE WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE.

That was all. As usual there was no signature. After a few words with the two detectives, Coulter hurried away to telephone his paper. He wanted a photographer.

BEN RICHARDS, at a desk adjoining that of Jimmy Coulter in the news-room of the *Record*, watched the



The interior of the coach was suddenly a caldron of seething flame.

girl from the information-desk as she distributed the mail. She paused and placed two letters and a package on Coulter's desk. Richards was an old friend and crony of Coulter's. He rose and walked over to Jimmy's desk, glanced at the package and read the address. Then he grinned, picked it up and weighed it thoughtfully in his hand. Next he lifted it up beside his head and shook it.

Then he called to Lon Fuller, another reporter who was sitting idly at a near-by desk.

"Come here, Lon," said Richards. "Methinks friend Coulter has received another bottle of nectar from Canada. It hefts just about right for a quart. When shaken, it gurgles. Let us open it by mistake."

"An idea worthy of a better brain than yours," opined Fuller. "I should have had it."

"It is understood," continued Richards, "that when we have opened the package by mistake and consumed its contents in a moment of thoughtlessness, we will carefully recork the bottle and leave it so that Jimmy can sniff the fragrant aroma of what he might have swallowed."

"Certainly," agreed Fuller gravely.

Grinning, Ben Richards picked up a pair of shears and snipped the stout cord with which the package was bound tight-

ly. The next moment the news-room rocked with the force of a terrific explosion. The air was filled with papers blown from many desks and with thick smoke that had a sharply pungent odor. Screams of women and startled cries from men mingled with the roar of the blast. When a sort of order was restored, it was discovered that both Ben Richards and Lon Fuller were dead, mangled horribly. A girl who had been sitting at a desk not far from the center of the explosion was lying in a heap—unconscious but alive. Several other members of the staff were injured slightly. What had been Jimmy Coulter's desk and typewriter were now a twisted mass of metal and kindling-wood. . . .

In the booth at Bellevue Hospital Jimmy Coulter had just got his connection and heard Lee Bryant's gruff hello when the sound of the explosion crashed against his ear. Then he heard a half-profan exclamation and then no further sound. The reason was that Lee Bryant's chair had gone over backward, and the city editor, maintaining a tight grip on the telephone, had torn the instrument loose from its fastenings.

Coulter wasted no time, but dashed out of the booth and the building, leaped into his battered roadster and headed for the *Record* building without regard for traffic-lights or speed-limits. Having pushed through a cordon of police and firemen by liberal use of his reporter's badge, he burst into the wrecked newsroom. It took him but a little time to find out what had happened and put two and two together. Jack Carberry, at the sports-desk, had been watching while Richards and Fuller opened the package the girl had left on Coulter's desk. It was quite plain that the package had been a bomb or infernal machine of some sort, sent to kill him. And there was no doubt in Coulter's mind that it had been sent by the individual who had confronted him at the door of his apartment on the preceding night, and who was responsible for the disappearance of the three officers and the mutilation of Patrolman Harper.

HALF an hour later Coulter had stated his conviction to the city editor and was at his desk, doing his vital part in the preparing of the story that was soon to be read by millions in the extra edition of the *Record*.

That edition roused a long-suffering city to heights of righteous indignation.

The millions read and assimilated these facts:

Three officers of the law had been abducted by a fiendish and unknown enemy who had set one of his victims adrift on the Hudson River in a smallboat—after having terribly burned him. In addition to these outrages the monster had attempted the life of a *Record* reporter, killing two innocent people and wounding a number of others.

In black type, boxed on the front page, the *Record* offered a reward of five thousand dollars for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for the outrages. The papers all carried photographs of the three officers who had fallen prey to the unknown. Pictures of their families also appeared, and the public clamor for the capture and punishment of the incredible criminal rose higher hourly.

With hands, arms and head swathed in bandages, and Death's shadow hovering low above him, Patrolman Harper lay on his hospital bed moaning with the agony of his burns. It would be days before the tortured officer would be able to speak or write.

IN the entire city there were but three persons who definitely suspected a certain man. Those three were Mrs. Dan Phalen, Jimmy Coulter and Lee Bryant. Jimmy had outlined to Lee Bryant in the following manner his reasons for suspecting that Tony Sandillo was alive and behind the crimes:

"Tony Sandillo was a handsome devil in a physical way. He had an enviable physique and a set of matinée-idol features. He had a reputation as a lady-killer and was proud of it. He was frequently called 'Sheik' Sandillo. If he escaped alive from the explosion that sank his launch, he was undoubtedly badly burned. That would have ruined his beauty—and what more terrible punishment could have been meted out to a vain egg like Sandillo?"

"I was more than half sold on the idea that Sandillo was behind these crimes, even before Tom Harper was found all roasted as he was. Now I am certain that Sandillo is the man we want. You remember that Tony was supposed to have a lot of boodle hidden away and that it was never found. With plenty of jack, why couldn't he have gathered a new gang as soon as his burns had healed, and started out upon a campaign of vengeance?"

"And besides, look at this!" Jimmy laid upon the city editor's desk the clipping which told of the wiping-out of the Sandillo gang.

"What about it?" demanded the editor as he picked up the clipping.

"Take your pencil," replied Jimmy, "and make a list of the officers' names in that story in the order you come to them."

After a quizzical look at the reporter, Bryant did as he had been asked to do. The list which he rapidly jotted down with his pencil read thus:

Thomas P. Harper,	Pete Schmidt,
Dan Phalen,	Orville Paddock,
Jake Zerr,	Thomas Dwyer,
Sam Nason,	Leonard Jones.

"All right," nodded Bryant when he had finished the list. "Now what?"

"Notice that the first three of the list have met with disaster in the order in which they appear in the story?" asked Coulter.

"By thunder," cried the city editor after another quick glance at the list, "that's right! Speak on, boy!"

"Since the human mind runs, after all, in ruts," went on Coulter, "what is more likely than that Sandillo made out a list of those he meant to punish from the very story you have in your hand? Isn't it something more than coincidence that the officers should have disappeared in the order in which they are named in the story?"

"Damn!" Bryant exclaimed. "You're right! Sandillo is our man!"

SHORTLY after his arrival at the office the next day, a letter reached Coulter. It arrived by the regular mail. At first glance the reporter recognized the pencil printing on the plain, cheap envelope. The message read:

COULTER:

THE DEVIL SEEMS TO HAVE HIS ARM AROUND YOUR NECK. I DIDN'T HAVE NOTHING AGAINST THE TWO SAPS WHO OPENED YOUR MAIL. THAT WAS YOUR GOOD LUCK AND TOUGH ON THEM. I'LL GET YOU NEXT TIME AND I WON'T MAKE ANY MISTAKE.

TONIGHT I WILL FINISH WITH JAKE ZERR. WHEN YOU SEE HIM TOMORROW, IT WILL BE THE LAST JOB OF MINE YOU WILL EVER LOOK AT. THAT GOES UNLESS YOU GET OUT OF TOWN WITHIN AN HOUR AFTER YOU SEE ZERR.

Coulter took the message directly to the city desk. Bryant read it and for

once there was no banter when the city editor spoke to Jimmy.

"Stick right in the office," ordered Bryant crisply. "The old man will want to see this—and he'll probably have something to say to you afterward."

Carrying the latest threatening communication, Bryant hurried across the news-room and entered the private office of the managing editor, Marston F. Shaw. Coulter sat on a corner of the city desk and turned over in his mind all the various angles of the baffling case. Then:

"Mr. Shaw wishes to see you in his office, Mr. Coulter," said a voice at his shoulder.

Coulter started and turned his eyes to see the managing editor's secretary. He nodded, muttered thanks and moved toward the sanctum of Marston F. In the private office he halted before the desk, his deep-set gray eyes meeting the steely blue ones of the managing editor steadily. Lee Bryant sat in a chair at one end of the massive desk.

"Mr. Coulter," said the managing editor crisply, "I have been discussing this latest message from the criminal who threatens you. The *Record* looks upon you as a very valuable man—and I think you will admit that its appreciation of your work has been shown frequently in material ways. The paper hopes to have your service at its disposal for yet a considerable time. So, in view of the fact that you seem to have been picked as a particular object of this criminal's enmity, I am offering you a vacation of indefinite duration on full pay—with the suggestion that you spend it in some other country than the United States. The vacation begins at once, and you may call at the cashier's window for a thousand dollars. Further cash will be sent you upon request at whatever place you direct by mail or wire."

"Yeah?" drawled Coulter, after a long moment of silence. "So I am to tuck my tail between my legs and run! What about the brave defy that Lee splashed on the front page the other day? I suppose he'll write another saying that when last seen, the *Record's* intrepid Mr. Coulter, with the entire resources of the paper at his disposal, was headed for the tall timber at a rapid pace?"

Bryant almost strangled. Despite his very determined effort to prevent it, a faint smile twitched at the corners of the managing editor's mouth. He continued to meet the reporter's level gaze.

"I have already told Mr. Bryant that he was a bit hasty in printing that article without first consulting the publisher or me," replied Shaw. "However, that matter can be taken care of—as soon as I have your assurance that you will start on your vacation tonight."

"Well," declared Coulter flatly, "you can fire me if you want to, Mr. Shaw, but you can't make me take a vacation—or quit working on this case. If you stop my pay, there is still the reward—which now amounts to a lot—to work for. And some other paper will pay me a nice price for the story, if I am able to lay it on the line. Right now I have a hunch that I want to check up on. Am I doing it for the *Record*—or on my own?"

Shaw shrugged his shoulders and shot a glance toward Lee Bryant.

"I told you," said the city editor.

"Hear that?" demanded the managing editor, glaring at Coulter. "He told me. He also told me that if you accepted the vacation he would kick you in a secluded spot, take your expense-money and cigarettes away from you, and go on the vacation himself."

"Is that so?" snorted Jimmy. "When ever that bald-headed ape—"

"That will be all," cut in Shaw. "Both of you go on back to the other room and continue your affairs while I still labor under the delusion that I am the boss of this paper. The title 'managing editor' must have been coined by some fellow with a peculiar sense of humor. I hope he has to spend eternity trying to manage a bunch of cub reporters on the Ge-henna *Gazette*."

NOW see what you've done," growled Bryant as he and Coulter walked across the news-room. "You've got the old man all worked up. You might have at least had a little consideration for the people who have their money invested in this rag. This friend of yours will probably send you enough dynamite next time to scatter this expensive building over half of the county."

"In that case," retorted Coulter, "they can go ahead and build that new plant that they have been needing for so many years. They might even erect a new Jimmy Coulter on the site where I once stood."

"I'll get out injunctions and things like that if they try," promised Bryant. "Now will you please run along and follow up that hunch you said you wanted



"Phalen," called Jimmy, "tell one of those rats to cut you loose. If he makes any trouble, we'll fill him with lead."

to check up on? Follow it a long ways. I feel safer when you are somewhere else."

Coulter made a derisive gesture, strode to his desk, put on his coat and hat and left the office. He went to Headquarters, where he asked for and received permission to check over certain records. It was nearing eleven o'clock that night when he finished the task and hastily put away the files. There was a light of satisfaction in his eyes. He thrust a few sheets of scribbled notes into his pocket and left the building.

As he emerged onto the street he saw Sam Nason, a detective whom he knew, entering a car which had been parked at the curb.

"Hey, Sam," called the reporter. "Going home? Drop me off at the paper, will you?"

"Climb in," invited the detective as he slid under the wheel, leaving the door open for Coulter. The car was a light coach, and owing to the warm night the windows were down. Coulter took the seat at the detective's side; and Nason started the engine and swung the car out into the rather sparse traffic stream.

They had covered little more than a couple of blocks when a big closed sedan came up alongside them. Besides the

driver the big car had two occupants, both in the rear seat. What followed happened in a very small fraction of the time in which it can be told:

The big machine swung close to the light coach. One of the dark-clad figures in the rear seat of the sedan leaned out the window and lifted a gallon tin can with both hands. Next moment the gasoline which the can had contained had been flung into the coach. The can followed. Then the second figure in the rear of the sedan scratched a bunch of matches and flicked the blazing sticks after the gas.

Then the driver of the big car stepped on the accelerator and the sedan leaped away up the street.

The interior of the coach was suddenly a seething caldron of flame. Nason had been drenched with the gas and plunged out his door into the street, a living torch.

Jimmy Coulter found himself skidding across the sidewalk as the driverless car hit the curb. He felt the bite of heat as the fire ate through his garments at several spots where the flung gasoline had splashed. The coach went over onto its side; and Coulter, rolling over and sitting up, beat automatically at his burning garments. A crowd

gathered. Several cars stopped, and some one began to play a fire-extinguisher on poor Nason.

But it was too late. When Sam Nason was finally rushed to the emergency ward, life had departed from his body. Coulter called the office from a telephone in the hospital and turned in the story. Then he hailed a cab and sped to the *Record* building. There he read proof on the article and amplified it in a few places.

"So your boy friend failed again!" said the city editor when the last sheet of corrected proof was laid before him by Jimmy. "Seems that he was right about the devil having his arm around your scrawny neck."

"I'm not so sure whether it was me or Nason that he was after," replied Jimmy.

"Well," observed Bryant, "if it was Nason, he put it over. How you feel about taking that vacation, now?"

"Same as I felt before," retorted Coulter. "I'm staying right here to get that fellow."

IT was nearing one o'clock in the morning when Jimmy Coulter reached the apartment building where he lived. He paused as he saw his battered roadster standing at the curb before the building and then grinned as he remembered that he had directed the garage, at which he had left it for a grease job, to leave the bus in front of his house.

He mounted the stairs to his apartment. In his bedroom, he sat down and again studied the story which he had slipped from the files of the *Record*.

"I must be right," Jimmy told himself finally. "There is no other answer. Sandillo is the man."

He lighted a cigarette and stretched his long body on the bed.

The jangle of the telephone on its stand interrupted his thoughts. And the voice which came to him over the wire he recognized all too well. It was the voice which had spoken to him through a mask several nights before.

"Hello—Coulter?"

"Yes."

"I have just learned that my boys almost rubbed you out when they got Sam Nason tonight," went on the voice. "I'm glad they didn't get you. It would have made me change a lot of my plans. I did not intend for Nason to die. I wanted him to live and suffer. You still listening?"

"Yes."

"Good," continued the voice. "If you go downstairs and look in your car, you will find Jake Zerr. He ain't dead, just chloroformed. After you look at him and take him to the hospital, you still can have an hour, like I promised, to lam out of town."

Before Coulter could say a word in answer, there was the click in the receiver which told of a severed connection. At once Coulter hurried out and ran down the stairs to his car.

Sandillo had spoken all too truly.

Slumped in the front seat of the roadster was the unconscious form of Jake Zerr. By the dim light which illuminated the side street, the reporter saw that the face of the limp and senseless detective was burned—horribly. A sick-sweet odor of chloroform hung in the air.

Steeling his nerves, the reporter went around the car, opened the door and after moving Zerr's limp body, slid under the wheel and headed at full speed for Bellevue Hospital.

There Coulter turned the stricken detective over to attendants and rushed to a telephone. The city editor's voice came over the wire after a very brief wait. Coulter told what he had to tell, and received Bryant's orders to stay at the hospital until Zerr recovered his senses. Then he returned to the operating-room where Zerr had been taken.

Half an hour later Zerr was conscious and lay moaning with the agony of his burns. But it was the same in his case as in that of Patrolman Harper. It would be a long time before it would be possible for him either to speak or write.

SICK from what he had seen, Coulter left the hospital and drove to the *Record* office.

The scanty staff remaining for the "dog-watch" had just sent the extra to press with the story of Zerr's discovery. Coulter drew the city editor into a secluded corner.

"I think I have the answer," said Jimmy.

"Spill it," invited the city editor.

"Do you happen to remember that, at the time of his supposed death, Tony Sandillo was crazy about that little cabaret dancer Maria Rosso?"

"Sure I remember, now that you mention it," nodded the city editor. "What about it?"

"As I see it," replied Jimmy Coulter, "there are two ways to get a line on

Sandillo—if he is still alive. One is through the girl. The other is to keep a close watch on the next one on that list of detectives."

"Smart!" declared Bryant. "As I remember it, the next one on the list is Pete Schmidt. Take as many men as you want from the staff and keep him covered every minute."

"Nix," demurred Coulter. "You can put somebody else—"

The reporter's speech was cut short by the arrival of Ben Lascar, the reporter whom Bryant had left to cover the city desk.

"Mr. Bryant," said Lascar, "somebody just called from police headquarters and said to tell you that Detective Peter Schmidt has been abducted from his home."

"There goes poor Pete!" cried Coulter. "Orville Paddock is next in line. Put a bunch of the boys on the job watching Paddock. I'm going out to work on the girl angle. So long."

WHEN Lee Bryant arrived at his desk, just after one o'clock on the following afternoon, he found Coulter sitting on one corner of it.

"Well," growled the city editor, "what now?"

"I went down to Headquarters last night while you were loafing in bed," replied the reporter. "I checked up on the stuff the cops took out of Tony Sandillo's apartment, and other hangouts, after they were supposed to have bumped him off."

"And I suppose you found a lock of his hair," growled the city editor. "Or was it a pair of his baby shoes?"

"Listen, egg," snapped Coulter. "I'm a reporter. I know you spend most of your time talking to sob-sisters, but try to come out of it for a minute. I am supposed to have the *Record's* entire seven dollars and fifty cents at my disposal. Will you try to find an artist around this dump who is good enough to copy Tony's signature onto a note that I have already prepared?"

Lee Bryant ceased bantering.

"What are you up to, long boy?" he demanded.

"I've found out where Maria Rosso lives," replied Jimmy. "I want to call on her as soon as possible and give her a note from Tony Sandillo."

"I get you," nodded the city editor. "Where's your sample signature? And where is the note you want signed?"

Jimmy drew a packet of papers from

his pocket, selected two from the lot and handed them to Bryant. The city editor rose and strode across the room to the corner occupied by the art department.

"Be ready in ten minutes," announced Bryant when he returned.

"Good," grunted the reporter. "Got Orville Paddock covered?"

"Yes, I've got six of the boys watching him. Three of them have cars. If our mysterious gent tries to grab Paddock, he's going to run into a mess of trouble. They got Pete Schmidt last night by—"

"I know all about that," interrupted Coulter. "Will you try to remember that I am a reporter? What city editor would know anything if the reporters didn't tell it to him?"

They were still wrangling some ten minutes later when an artist came to the desk with the note which he had been told to sign with a copy of Tony Sandillo's signature. Bryant took the sheet, glanced at it and passed it to Jimmy.

"Good work, Ted," nodded Coulter, addressing the artist. "You should go in for forgery in a big way."

"Nix," grinned the artist as he turned back toward his workshop. "I like to paint landscapes in my spare time—and the big forgers spend too much time in little rooms with bars across the windows."

AT three o'clock Jimmy Coulter was ringing the bell of an apartment in a pretentious building which faced Park Avenue. He informed the colored maid who answered his ring that he had a message to deliver personally to Maria Rosso. Instructing him to wait, the maid closed the door. It was opened again a few minutes later by a voluptuous young woman of the Latin type, clad in a vivid negligee.

This was the dancer who had been the favorite of the gangster Sandillo before his final disastrous clash with the law. She had her place in the gang leader's affections for more than a year at that time—and Jimmy Coulter was praying to whatever gods there be that she still held it. He handed her the note to which the artist had forged Sandillo's familiar first name.

Watching the dancer keenly but covertly as she unfolded and read the note, Jimmy saw her dark eyes narrow, and her full mouth harden slightly. The note was typed on a good grade of bond

paper, and it instructed Maria to trust the bearer completely and do as he might suggest. The reporter realized that it had not gone over—but the next moment the girl was giving him a dazzling smile and pretending that it had.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Slade," said the dancer in a soft, throaty voice. "Will you come in?" She stepped back from the doorway.

Jimmy's wits were working like lightning. Not by look or move did he betray the fact that he knew she distrusted him.

"Not now, Miss Rosso," Coulter declined. "There are some things I must do at once. I only stopped to tell you that you must be ready to go with me in an hour. Something has happened that changes Tony's plans. He will tell you about it when we meet him. Will you be ready? There is no time to lose."

"I will be ready," promised the dancer.

"Good," nodded Jimmy, glancing at his watch. "I'll be back in an hour."

The apartment door did not close until after Coulter had entered the elevator, but the reporter pretended not to notice that fact. In the ornate lobby he went directly to a telephone-booth. From there he dialed the operator. He had prepared for all emergencies. A moment later he was talking to a detective who had been stationed in the telephone-exchange.

"She just called a number," said the detective in answer to Jimmy's query. "The operator gave her the busy signal, and she hung up."

"Got the number?" inquired Jimmy.

"Sure," came the answer. "It's being checked right now. Hang on for a couple of minutes."

There was a brief wait, and then the detective's voice again. "Phone she called is in a private house on Riverside Drive," he told the reporter. He added the number of the residence.

"Good," replied Coulter. "In case she calls again, give her the old busy signal."

"Sure," agreed the detective.

LEAVING the booth, Coulter walked briskly from the place. At the curb stood a big car in which sat two plain-clothes officers. The reporter paused beside the car.

"Go in and get the dame, boys," he said. "Take the maid and anybody else you find in the apartment. You know

what to do with them. I'll be calling in after a bit."

THE officers climbed from their car as Coulter entered his roadster, parked just ahead, and drove swiftly away. Half an hour later more than a score of police in plain-clothes were stationed in spots where they covered every possible exit from a certain mansion on the drive. Having driven past and seen that all was set, the reporter went to a telephone in a side street drug-store and from there he called the number which Maria Rosso had called immediately after his visit.

There was no answer. After a wait, Coulter hung up and called the precinct station to which the officers were to have taken those arrested in Maria Rosso's apartment. In a moment he was talking to the desk sergeant.

"The dame ducked," answered the sergeant. "The boys got the darky maid and a Jap cook. They're here now, but won't talk. The boys figure the wench must have beat it by the back way just as soon as you left the apartment."

"Damn!" said Jimmy as he slammed up the receiver.

A few minutes later he was back on the Drive. He pulled his car up to the curb and spoke to the officer in charge of the cordon about the mansion.

"You can close in and frisk the dump, Garrity," growled Jimmy, "but it will be empty. The Rosso dame outsmarted me. She got out and got the tip to Sandillo somehow."

It was as Coulter had prophesied—the mansion was empty of humanity. There were signs of a hurried departure having been made very recently by the inhabitants, but nothing was found to furnish a lead as to where they might have gone. A guard was posted over the place, and the rest of the raiders departed. A very much disgruntled Jimmy Coulter went back to the office of the *Record*.

"So we are all at loose ends again," he concluded his report to Lee Bryant. "The only thing we have accomplished is to make certain that Sandillo is not dead, and that the Rosso woman knows where he is. She is probably with him now. The job is to find—"

"You Mr. James Coulter?" interrupted a messenger boy.

"I am," admitted Jimmy.

"Here's a letter for you," said the boy. "The lady said you'd give me a dollar."

"The lady is generous with my



money," remarked Jimmy as he took the envelope from the boy's hand. "Stick around a minute."

The envelope contained another of the now familiar penciled notes. Jimmy unfolded it and read:

COULTER:

I WAS RIGHT. YOU ARE A DANGEROUS GUY. NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHO I AM, I WILL HAVE TO WORK FASTER. YOU CAME ALMOST CATCHING ME THIS AFTERNOON. YOU WILL NEVER COME SO CLOSE AGAIN. ENJOY YOUR LAST DAY OF LIVING.

Jimmy fished a dollar in change from his pocket and handed it to the boy. "Was the lady pretty?" he inquired.

"I'll say she was," replied the lad, his teeth flashing in a wide grin.

"Black hair?"

"Yep."

"Thanks," nodded Jimmy. "That's all."

As the boy turned away, Coulter laid the message on the desk before the city editor.

"And that is that," grunted Bryant after he had scanned the printed words. "What are you going to do with your last few hours?"

"Going to spend the next hour or so," replied Jimmy, "back in the reference-room looking over Mr. Sandillo's record. I smoked him out of one hole with the aid of the files. Maybe I can again."

COULTER'S stay in the reference-room was less than half an hour, for he soon found a clipping which gave him the lead he had hoped for. The story was some four years old and dealt with a raid made upon a secluded country estate located north of Newburgh and owned by Sandillo. The tale described a large building set back among the timbered hills and housing an enormous still.



"Close your eyes, dick," purred the torturer. "Now I'll try the end of your nose." Then at a noise, Sandillo whirled.

The building had originally been built for an ice-house and was half underground.

"Just the spot to keep and torture his prisoners," muttered Coulter, thrusting the clipping into his pocket. "I'll have me a look."

Back in the news-room, Coulter went to his desk, unlocked a bottom drawer and took out an efficient-looking automatic. He dropped the weapon into a side pocket of his coat and left the office.

Just as he stepped onto the sidewalk, some sixth sense warned him of danger. He lifted his eyes just in time to see a machine-gun's ugly muzzle thrust out of the window of a sedan parked at the curb. Coulter flung himself backward and down. Lead plucked his hat from his head as he fell. Then he was on the tiled floor of the corridor and rolling swiftly to safety.

On the street the vandal car had leaped into action and was speeding away from the scene.

Coulter hurriedly picked himself up, retrieved his punctured hat and plunged through the gathering crowd. But he was too late to catch sight of the fleeing foe. He had covered two blocks before he thought of the paper.

"Lee will rave," he chuckled to himself. "But let him." He turned back to get his roadster.

DUSK was settling fast as Coulter drove across the George Washington bridge and headed north up the west side of the Hudson. He knew that he could reach Newburgh by way of the Storm King highway in two hours, and he did not push the roadster, since it was not his desire to reach his destination until the sheltering darkness had completely fallen.

It was nearing nine o'clock and quite dark when he turned his car into a by-road north of Newburgh and snapped off the lights. Taking a package he had obtained at the Nyack police-station under his arm, he walked north for another quarter-mile, where he turned into another side road. He followed this road for several hundred yards and then halted. Looming before him, a blacker spot in the darkness, was the old half-sunken ice-house that he sought. At one spot beneath its eaves, light shone through a long narrow crack. A few moments later the reporter had his eye glued to that crack.

There were six free men in that big cellar-like room, and two captives, bound to supporting posts in the center of the place. The captives were Bullet-proof Dan Phalen and Pete Schmidt. One of the free men was the hood-masked figure which had thrust the gun into Jimmy's middle several nights before in the doorway of his apartment. Jimmy knew instinctively that the scarlet-masked one was Tony Sandillo.

As Jimmy watched, Sandillo picked up a plumber's blow-torch from the floor and proceeded to light it while he talked to the bound and helpless Phalen.

"Well, Dan," gloated the voice from behind the mask, "tonight you see the third of the lousy dicks that helped you chase me down that night in the harbor get *his*. I'm sorry Nason died so quick. I wanted you to see him."

"You murderin' devil!" cried Phalen in a husky voice. "'Tis tearing yez apart with me two hands I'll be doin' if ye'll turn me loose for wan minute."

SANDILLO laughed. The torch in his hand was now spitting a blue tongue of flame.

He walked slowly toward Phalen and extended the torch until its flame made the big detective flinch and twist his head away.

"Nice, aint it?" inquired the masked monster. "I can hardly wait for when I let you feel its kiss. But I want you to see the others get theirs—you enjoy it so much. Watch now!"

Sandillo turned and advanced to where Detective Schmidt was bound to a pillar in such a position that he faced Phalen across a distance of some twenty feet.

"Close your eyes, dick," purred the torturer. "They'll soon be closed forever. Now I'll try the end of your nose."

Inexorably he extended the torch.

The crack through which Jimmy Coulter was watching was almost two inches wide.

The young reporter had snatched out his gun and now he thrust its muzzle through the crack. In his haste, he made some noise, and Sandillo whirled about, then dropped the torch and reached for his own weapon.

But Coulter had aimed and now fired with the deliberation of cold fury. Without a sound Sandillo wilted to the sawdust-littered floor. The half-drawn gun dropped from his lifeless hand upon the still-burning torch.

"Stand where you are," Coulter shouted through the crack at the other gangsters. "We have you covered. We'll drop you like Sandillo, if you move."

The bewildered henchmen of the slain gang lord obeyed.

"Phalen," called Jimmy, "tell one of those rats to cut you loose. If he makes any trouble, we'll fill him with lead."

TEEN minutes later the gangsters were prisoners, and Phalen and Schmidt were in charge of them. In the house adjacent to the ice-house prison, Maria Rosso was found. She was made a prisoner also.

It was Maria who, to save her beautiful neck, told how Tony Sandillo had escaped from the explosion in the harbor. How he had finally made shore, badly burned; his handsome face was afterward scarred and ugly; and this had rankled until it made a madman of the gangster. He had used a large sum of money which he had hidden away to gather a few of the faithful and launch his campaign of revenge; and his twisted mind had conceived the idea of maiming those who had been instrumental in his downfall in the same way as he had been maimed.

Next morning's *Record* carried the story of Sandillo's death and the end of his reign of terror. Jimmy Coulter was proclaimed winner of the reward-money and his donation of the fund to the families of the slain and mutilated officers was announced in a footnote.

"Sap!" said Lee Bryant when Jimmy announced the disposal he meant to make of the reward. "But what else can you expect of a feather-brained reporter?"

"I should worry," grinned Coulter. "Am I not the intrepid reporter behind which the *Record* places its entire—"

"Bologna!" snorted the city editor.

REAL EXPERIENCES

What was the hour in your life most crowded with excitement? In this department five of your fellow-readers tell of their most memorable experiences. (For details of our prize offer for these Real Experience stories, see page 3). First a Western miner tells of an extraordinary adventure—happening above-ground.



The Snowslide

By J. C. De Wall

DURING my career as a hard-rock mining man, I have had many thrilling experiences. I have successfully dodged cave-ins and falling rocks; I have escaped from "running ground;" I have outrun a sudden inrush of water from the breast of a tunnel; picking near missed shots has been almost an everyday occurrence in my life; I have been overcome by powder fumes upon returning to a stope too soon after shooting—but the one outstanding thrill, and one I will never forget, was above-ground.

Through the winter of 1925-26 I had charge of a small mine in the heart of the Rockies, almost on the crest of the Continental Divide. I employed four men, one of whom was my only son, a young man of twenty-three who had stayed with me since the loss of my wife. The bond between us had been strengthened by that tragedy, and I was much concerned with his safety in the mine—for it was known as a dangerous one. I tried to keep him out of the risky places, and had many an argument with him over this policy.

Along in April we ran short of supplies, and it became necessary to cease operations for a while. I congratulated myself, in that six months had passed without any of the men being injured

in any way, and looked forward to a release from his constant apprehension.

My son and I decided to "go out" for a while—get in touch with civilization once more, and enjoy some of the attractions of the city. The weather had been exceptionally severe during the winter, and the hills were covered with snow ten feet deep, not to mention the great "combs" on the ridges—wind-packed drifts fifty to one hundred feet deep.

The trail to Montezuma, the little mining-camp where we were to take the stage to the railroad, wound along the mountain-side, in and out of dense timber and through open spaces. One of these open spaces was the path of a snowslide, but in our eager anticipation of a few days of enjoyment in the city, we gave no thought to the possibility of a snowslide.

A warm April sun had made the snow soggy on the trail that morning, so that snowshoeing was not too good. Big Bill, the packer, who had volunteered to go along and help carry our luggage, led the way as we left the mine, with my son following, while I wallowed along behind. I say "wallowed," because I had on a pair of ill-balanced snowshoes which made it difficult for me to keep up with the pace set by the two younger men.

By the time we reached the open

space which was the path of the snowslide, I was some two hundred feet to the rear of the other two, much to their amusement. They were nearing the timber on the far side of the open space, while I was approximately in the middle of it, when there came a dull *boom* from far up the mountain-side. Bill shouted: "Look out—here she comes!"

I saw the boys break into a run for the timber; then I glanced up the hill and saw a huge bank of snow, dead timber and rocks rushing toward me at terrific speed. A hurried look over my shoulder told me that my only avenue of escape, if any, was to turn and try to get to the timber I had just left. Before I could take two steps in that direction, the avalanche was upon me.

I shouted "Good-by, son," thinking that my boy was in the clear, and then the wall of snow engulfed me. I remember thinking that this was the end of my life, for I knew that few men, if any, ever survived a snowslide.

The ride was on—under the snow, on top of it, feet-first, head-first—expecting at any moment the crashing blow of a tree or rock which would end it all. It seemed that an age had passed, when I felt the mass of snow about me slow down and stop. I found myself with my feet down where they belonged; but I was completely buried, and my snowshoes were pinning me down with the weight of snow on them.

I was slowly suffocating—I had to do something! I succeeded in getting my knife out of my pocket, then worked it down my leg and cut the snowshoes off. After that, it was but a moment or two until I had scrambled to the surface. The good old sun was shining brightly and everything was quiet.

I called out, "Here I am—all right—not even hurt," and looked up the hill toward the trail where I had last seen the boys, still thinking they had made it to safety. Only one figure stood there—it was Big Bill.

Fear clutching my throat, I managed to choke out: "Where is Ray?"

Back came the answer I dreaded to hear: "Ray is gone!"

Ray gone! Oh, God—my boy, the only thing left to me worth living for—gone, somewhere under that mountain of snow! The agony of those next few moments was greater than any I had ever suffered. It couldn't be—the boy I had tried to keep out of danger all winter—taken from me!

"Bill," I cried, "get on down here! Don't stand there like a post! Get into action—let's find him!"

Bill, galvanized into action by my command, started down the path of the snowslide, while I floundered up over the pile of snow before me and met him at the side of the swept space.

Together we stumbled on, looking, hoping for the seemingly impossible. Could he ever be found in that immense pile of snow, rocks and timbers?

Suddenly a joyous shout from Bill: "Here he is!"

"Alive?"

"I can't tell—just his arm showing, as though waving for help."

I hastened to the spot—a great blood-stained spot, I saw as I came closer! Frantically we dug with our bare hands until we could free him from that snowy imprisonment.

He was still breathing—thank God, still alive, but what a sight! Unconscious, left arm mashed to a pulp, a great gash over one eye, face black and blue, bleeding from nose, eyes and mouth. Would he live or not?

We carried him back up to the trail; then Bill rushed to Montezuma for help. Soon many men came, bringing a stretcher.

Fourteen anxious hours passed—the roads were impassable for automobiles, and the nearest doctor was twenty-eight miles away. We gave the lad first aid, then loaded him into a sled and hauled him fourteen miles to the little town of Dillon, where the doctor met us.

Not a word from my boy as the doctor labored over him, calling forth his greatest skill, that the lad might not lose that mangled left arm. At last his work was done, and he left me, with the assurance that my son could save his arm, though it might be crooked and stiff.

I KEPT vigil over the still form until the early hours of the next day, when came my greatest thrill of a day of thrills! As my son struggled up from the darkness which had enveloped him for fourteen hours, he called: "Dad! Where is my dad?"

"Right here, son," I answered.

"You all right, Dad?"—anxiously.

"Not hurt a bit, son," I replied; "but you are in pretty bad shape."

"Oh, hell, that's all right. I can stand it if you are not hurt!"

And I knew that life was worth living for a boy like that.



Two girl passengers,
an old plane—and the
undercarriage washed
out. Happy landings!

By
H. Latane
Lewis

Flying for Life

THE business of being an aviator has amusing interludes, although some of them border on tragedy. Just such an incident occurred to me last summer.

I had been on a barnstorming tour of the Middle West. The season was drawing to a close; and my ship, of an antiquated pattern to begin with, was now well-worn. One Sunday afternoon I put on a stunting exhibition at the airport of a small town. After the show I began taking passengers for short hops over the neighboring countryside.

It was late afternoon and I was about to call it a day, when two young ladies appeared and requested a flight. They climbed into the front cockpit; and after warming up the engine for a few minutes, I took off. The ship received a violent jolt as she was leaving the ground and I was a bit apprehensive for a moment, but was soon reassured as we settled into a straight normal course.

All went well as I made the usual circuit of the surrounding fields, laid out in checkerboard design. To provide an extra thrill, I pulled the old dive-and-zoom, which gives the novice the impression of wild flying, but which is really not at all dangerous. As I approached the airport, I killed the engine and began to sideslip in. Suddenly I noticed a mechanic run out and wave his arms over his head to attract my attention. He then picked up an object which I

soon distinguished to be a wheel and held it up. I realized at once that I had lost it in getting off.

Cutting the gun, I glided very low over the field and called loudly: "Which one?"

The answering shriek was unintelligible. This I tried several times, but was unable to understand the reply.

All this failed to receive any attention from my fair cargo, who apparently perceived nothing unusual.

I had noticed a river about five miles distant, and decided to attempt a landing in it. After flying up and down the stream for some minutes I found a fairly long, straight stretch. There were several small boats in the way, however, so I glided low over each of them and shouted, "Move away," at the same time gesturing with a wide sweep of the arm. They got the idea and pulled to one side.

I had never landed a seaplane and had only a very hazy idea of how it should be done; and I knew that to bring a land plane down in the water successfully was vastly more difficult. When the carriage strikes the water at about sixty miles an hour, the plane is almost certain to be hurled violently over on its back. I recalled, with discomforting vividness, having seen just such an accident. I did not know, of course, whether or not the girls could swim, and even if they could, there would very likely be difficulty in their extricating themselves from the submerged cockpit. So upon second

thought it seemed most advisable to fly back and attempt a landing on the airport, where help was nearest in case of injury. . . .

A large crowd had gathered at the field, for word of the impending crash had spread quickly. An ambulance, with its large red cross plainly visible, stood waiting at the edge of the runway. I came down low, dragged the field a couple of times and formulated a plan of approach. I decided to attempt a three-point landing, using the good wheel and the wing-tip on that side, in addition to the tail-skid. To carry out this plan, it was absolutely imperative that I know which wheel was missing.

Climbing for altitude, I pushed the ship up to about four thousand feet. Fortunately the air was not bumpy, and I set the stabilizer to hold the plane in a shallow dive. I unbuckled my safety-belt and carefully climbed up on the seat and back over the streamlined headrest and got astride the fuselage. The wind tore at me viciously, and it was with extreme difficulty that I slid along backward toward the tail.

There was nothing at all on which to get a grip. My hands slid over the highly "doped" surface as if it were glass. My only hope of staying with the ship was by wrapping my legs as tightly as I could against the sides of the fuselage.

I wriggled back almost against the fin and then ducked my head forward. I could now see the landing-gear. The struts on the left side were broken and hung uselessly without the wheel.

Before I could get back to the cockpit, however, a convectional air-current threw down the right wing. The plane slipped for a few moments, then fell off on this side, and the nose swung around rapidly. My weight put the center of gravity farther back than it should have been. We were in a perfect position for a spin. I thanked my stars we had four thousand feet of altitude. The plane immediately started going down in a flat spin, rotating very rapidly. I leaned forward and grabbed hold of the cockpit cowling and hung on. The centrifugal force was terrific; it took all my strength to keep from being hurled away from the plane.

THE earth was rushing up at us at a frightful speed. I knew if I did not get to the controls immediately, it would be too late. Summoning up all of my fast-waning strength, I got over the side of the cockpit headfirst. We soon stopped

spinning, and I put the stick forward to regain flying speed.

I came out of the dive so low that I had to zoom up to clear some trees. The people at the airport thought we had crashed, and the ambulance was bumping across the field in our direction when I came roaring over the treetops.

My passengers seemed not in the least perturbed. They apparently thought it was all in fun, or else just the normal manner of handling an airplane.

The gas was running low, and I realized that I would have to sit down quickly if I wanted to avoid doing so with a dead stick. Knowing full well the hazard involved in a one-wheel landing, I desired to reduce the danger to my passengers to a minimum. I had been in several crack-ups; I knew that one's head is usually dashed forward with considerable violence against the front of the cockpit. With the idea of safeguarding against this as much as possible, I removed my shirt and my flying breeches, handed them forward to the girls and told them to wrap these about their heads. They laughingly obeyed, obviously much astonished at the procedure. Then I took the cushion out of my seat, directing the girls to do likewise, and to hold both cushions before their faces.

When I felt that I had taken every precaution I could for their safety, I maneuvered the ship down over the field. The wind-sock on top of the hangar showed that a light breeze had sprung up. I swung my bad side around into it and cut the switch to lessen the danger of fire or explosion when we struck the ground. Putting the right wing down, I kicked left rudder hard. We side-slipped sharply, reducing speed. Then, just above the field, I kicked her out straight. We skimmed along at the speed of an express train. As we began to settle, I put the right wing down slightly. The ship hit hard and took a high bounce. I held the stick back against my stomach to keep the tail on the ground. We ground-looped and skidded across the field in a great cloud of dust, but stayed right side up.

When we finally stopped, the girls clambered out, and with amused glances at my attire, handed me back my clothes. They both thanked me and started to walk off. Suddenly one of them turned back. "Oh, Mr. Aviator," she said with a quizzical look, "isn't it an awful lot of trouble to have to undress every time you come down?"



Two boys in
the Tennessee
mountains, a
target rifle, an
heirloom shot-
gun—and a
bear on the
warpath.

By **Ai Dee**

Old Copperstock

OLD COPPERSTOCK was a double-barreled, muzzle-loading shotgun. The stock was patched up with several pieces of sheet copper; hence the name.

This old gun had been owned by most every boy in the community excepting me, until one fine day I bargained for it. When the deal was finally consummated, I was minus one pair of work goats, a dollar watch, seven pigeons and a Barlow knife. This, I think, was the worst trade I ever made; but from the viewpoint of my parents it undoubtedly was the best, for they had got rid of most of the pests around the farm.

Along with the gun, I of course received a full complement of the things necessary for the operation of a muzzle-loader, which included a shot-pouch and a powder-horn, to say nothing of a goodly supply of shot, powder and firing caps.

Immediately I gave my brother, who was then thirteen, a .22-caliber single action rifle, for which I had no further use since I was now the proud possessor of a real shotgun.

We began preparations for a big hunt which was to take place the following day, Saturday.

My father owned a pack of well-trained hounds which we always took with us, and right here I would like to say that it is to these noble veterans of many a battle that we owe our well-being today. Next morning we went out on the side of Cumberland Mountain

with fifteen of these hounds and spirits plenty high.

On the night before the hunt I had cut a handful of slugs from a piece of sheet lead. On entering the woods I placed them in the right barrel of the gun. It is needless to say that behind them I put a goodly amount of powder. Old Copperstock was loaded for bear. I intended to use the left barrel for ordinary shooting, and the right—well, for bear.

We had not hunted long till I discovered that my gun was not the gun I thought it to be, for my brother was bringing down all the game, and I was getting nothing but the fun of shooting and reloading.

Eventually we reached the mountain-top. The dogs were hunting in every direction, and we became separated, he hunting close to the edge of the mountain, and I farther out on the tableland.

The edge or break of these mountains is usually marked by many cliffs, which vary in height—sometimes two feet and sometimes two hundred. Almost always there is a dense thicket of laurel between them and the larger timber.

We had been separated about thirty minutes when I heard him shoot three or four times as fast as one could with a single-action rifle. I paid no attention to this at first.

Then he called me, and the tone of his voice told me there was trouble.

When I reached the other side of the thicket after much weaving to and fro, I was almost breathless; and when I

looked upon the ground below the ledge of rock upon which I was standing, I was entirely so. For there was a huge bear dividing his time between the dogs at his heels and my brother who was standing about forty feet to my left on the same ledge of rock. At each crack of the .22 the bear would let out a blood-curdling snarl, slap a dog and gain a foot of ground.

While this was going on, I was stealing back to the edge of the thicket with Old Copperstock ready. But just as I was ready to shoot, my foot slipped and I fell. The gun jammed into the laurel, and a branch became fastened between the ramrod of the gun and its barrels.

The bear was trying for *me* now. It seemed hours before I could extricate my gun and get it into shooting position. I crept closer cautiously, aimed at his huge breast, and pulled the trigger. The gun did not fire! Upon a hurried examination I found there was no cap beneath the hammer. Frantically I searched my pockets for the little tin box containing the caps. When I did find it, I was so excited that I spilled the whole works in the brush at my feet in removing its cover. With tear-filled eyes I searched for a cap. This was precious time wasted, for the caps were no larger than an ordinary match-head, and the brush beneath my feet had swallowed them.

It seemed the next best thing for us to do was to beat it for home, leaving the bear and the dogs to fight it out, but my better sense told me this would never do. The wounded bear would soon kill all of the dogs and then follow us.

Down the mountain went another dog yelping his last. Up jumped the bear in another attempt to mount the ledge of rock that separated us, and *splat* went my brother's .22. Another lunge, and the bear was on the ledge! And then, as I rose to my feet, I noticed there was a firing-cap beneath the hammer of the left barrel. I quickly placed it beneath the hammer of the right barrel. The bear stood erect. As he parted the laurel with his huge forepaws, I fired into his breast. He trembled for an instant, then folded his paws over a gaping wound and crumpled to the ground. He struggled desperately to get to his feet again, but fell off the ledge instead—this time to stay.

When my brother reached me, I was nursing a badly torn hand, caused by the recoil of the gun. He apologized for not killing the bear with his little .22!

Hard of Hearing

By John Meehan

IT is no joke to be hard of hearing. It is very inconvenient and embarrassing at times; and there was one time when my deafness, while it made a sort of hero of me, brought me closer to death than I had ever been before.

I am employed as a bookkeeper in the bank in my home town. There are four of us in the bank: Mr. Wood, the president, who takes an active part in the management of the bank; Martin, the cashier; Phillips, a bookkeeper; and I.

The bank faces east, and the cage in which Martin, Phillips and I work has two windows. One faces the door and is the main window, and there is another on the south side of the cage which we use only when business is rushing.

It was about nine-thirty on a morning several months ago in the early spring. Mr. Wood was busy at his desk outside the cage. Phillips was working at the posting-machine, and Martin was at the large desk inside the cage. I had been working on the books beside Martin, but had gone back to the southwest corner of the cage to fill my pipe from a can of tobacco I kept there.

There were no customers in the bank, but as I turned after filling my pipe, I saw two unmasked men with guns in their hands. One of them had covered Mr. Wood and was forcing him to rise from his desk. The other had covered Martin and Phillips, who were standing with their hands up. The large desk in the center of the cage partially obstructed the bandits' view of the southwest corner of the cage, and the robbers did not see me. They were slowly forcing Mr. Wood, Phillips and Martin along the north side of the cage to the rear of the large desk. If I could only edge along the south side of the cage, keeping the desk between them and me until I reached the burglar alarm beneath the main window on the east!



They held up the bank; and because the book-keeper was deaf, he proceeded to make a hero of himself.

I had on rubber-heeled shoes, and I began to walk slowly along the south side of the cage. I reached the little-used window on the south, and still the bandits had not seen me. With low-voiced orders they were forcing the others to the rear of the cage. I passed by the window on the south, and with my heart pounding so that it seemed to me the bandits would hear it, I reached the main window on the east side of the cage. The alarm was directly beneath it, and I stepped on it.

Now what, I wondered. Just then one of the bandits saw me. He whirled, uttered a curse, and covered me. "Back with the others!" he cried. "What the hell is the matter with you, Angelo?"

I joined the others who were behind the desk. Why had the bandit called me Angelo? We were forced to lie face downward on the floor while the bandits rifled the cash-drawers by the teller's window. Then they forced Martin to open the vault, and from it they took several thousand dollars in cash and securities. Then, ordering us to lie as we were for fifteen minutes, they hurried out the door—and into the hands of a posse of armed citizens led by the town police.

Mr. Wood, Martin, Phillips and I were alone in the bank for a moment. White-faced, shaken, we stared at each other.

"Who stepped on that burglar alarm?" asked Mr. Wood.

"Why, I did," I answered.

"Great heavens, John!" said Mr. Wood in the loud tone he used when he talked to me. "Why did you take such a chance? God alone knows why you're alive now!"

"But it wasn't such a chance," I said. "They didn't see me until after I had stepped on the alarm."

"Didn't see you!" Mr. Wood cried. "Why, they had you covered all the time!"

"Oh, no," I told him, thinking he had got confused in the excitement. "They didn't notice me until after I stepped on the alarm. They were busy with you and Martin and Phillips. Neither of them noticed me."

"Neither of them?" said Mr. Wood, looking at me strangely. "Great Scott, man, didn't you know there were three of them?"

"Three of them!" I cried. "Where was the other? I saw only two."

"The third one was on the south side of the cage by the window there," said Mr. Wood. "He took no active part in the robbery. A guard, I suppose. He had you covered all the while you were edging along the south side of the cage."

"But he said nothing!" I cried. "Why didn't he stop me?"

"He tried to," said Mr. Wood. "He ordered you four times, in a low but distinct voice, as you passed the window, to put up your hands."

Goose-flesh broke out all over me. "And I never heard him!" I cried. "I didn't know he was there!"

"Why he didn't shoot you is a mystery," Mr. Wood said. "Lacked nerve, I suppose, when it came to a showdown."

AND that is how, because I am hard of hearing, the bank-robbery failed. And I want to repeat again that it is no joke to be deaf. Even yet I break out in a cold sweat when I think of myself edging along the cage, confident that I was unobserved, and all the while I was covered by a desperate man with a gun in his hand! I often wonder what he thought when I paid no attention to his command to raise my hands.



A small boy follows his father into a factional battle in a Western town—a battle that ends in tragedy.

By Jack Skosko

A Night of Terror

AT the time of this trouble I was a lad eleven years of age. My folks lived in the little mining town of Angels Camp, where my father was a mine foreman for one of the large mining companies.

There had been a rivalry between two factions in Angels Camp, but not until lately had hostilities come to such a head. The Saturday before, a miner belonging to one of the factions had been killed, and two others had been badly beaten. These men belonged to the Purdyville gang, which was in power in all the territory north of Main Street.

When my father came home on this Saturday night, he hurriedly washed himself, and was impatiently waiting for Mother to serve supper. He wanted to hurry to town, for he as well as everybody else, had heard the Purdyville crowd were going to avenge their men.

At Mother's call to supper I entered the house, and as I did so, I heard her and Dad discussing the impending trouble. It seemed that the Purdyville men were blaming my father for the death of their man—a crime that my father was not guilty of, though he had been in the general mix-up when the killing took place. My mother was afraid that friends of the dead man would try to kill my father in revenge.

After supper I again wandered out to the front porch. Presently Father left the house, and as he was walking past me, he stopped for a moment and placing his hand on my shoulder, he said: "Go to your mother, son!" Then he was gone, out the front gate and heading for town.

I watched him until a bend in the trail hid him from my view. My heart seemed to swell with pride. I was proud of my father, and imagined him like a knight of old, going out to do battle with the foe. When the trail hid him from my sight, I turned to the house, and with a strange thrill and excitement surging in my breast, I went to find Mother.

I found her seated in a rocking-chair and crying. The sight of her in tears stunned me. Mixed emotions shook me—sorrow for my mother, and pride for my father, who was causing my mother's sorrow. My mother realized his danger, but the thought never entered my head. I never thought of my father as the loser in any battle. My mother placed her arms around me and told me between her sobs that she had pleaded with Father to stay away from town that night, but he said if he stayed home, he would be thought a coward by his friends and enemies alike; he must see it through. Just before dark some of the neighbor

women came to our house. They all were sad, and their eyes gave evidence of shed tears. They sought comfort in company and had gathered at our house so as not to be alone with their fears.

A few minutes after the arrival of these women, Mother ushered my brother and me to bed. After turning out the light in our room, she left us, telling us to go right to sleep. As I lay in bed I could picture in my mind all sorts of things that all youths thrill over: Action, fights between big strong men—these thoughts set my mind on fire. Somehow in these dreams my father was always pictured as the victor. Sleep to me at that moment was out of the question.

Suddenly a cold chill seemed to run over my entire body, leaving me numbed and terror-stricken. What if it were my father who was shot or beaten severely? I began to toss in bed until I thought I could not stand it any longer.

A wild idea entered my head. I would go to town and see for myself what was happening. Carefully I laid my plans. I would dress in the dark, and slipping out of the window, I would take the trail to town. By listening to my brother's even breathing, I knew that he was asleep and would not spoil my chances of going.

SILENTLY as possible, I slid out of the bed, and with trembling hands fumbled with my clothes until I was finally dressed. Placing each foot down carefully, I crossed to the window. While in the act of raising the window I heard footsteps coming up our front walk to our door. At last, I thought, here are the ill tidings that I had so fearfully expected to hear. My knees seemed to turn to jelly, and I clung to the window for support. Clenching my teeth tightly to keep them from rattling, I strained my ears so as not to miss the first words of the visitor who was at that moment knocking at our front door. Hearing the knock, my mother hastened to open the door. It was my uncle—I recognized his voice immediately. Seeing the women gathered in the room, and noticing their silence and sorrowful looks, he laughingly inquired if they were holding a wake. He told them that they should not be worried, because there would be no trouble in town that night; and that their menfolk would be home soon.

I could hear my uncle's footsteps as he entered his room, which was next to the one my brother and I occupied. Lis-

tening, I could hear him open the drawers on his dresser. The next moment my body suddenly tensed. I did not hear my uncle's movements any longer, but I heard several clicks and other sounds that I knew well, having heard them many times before when my uncle was preparing for a hunting trip. They were the sounds of a weapon being loaded! There was a door between our room and his, and not trusting my ears, I tiptoed to the door. Peeping in through the key-hole I could see him standing on the far side of his room with his back turned toward me. As I looked, I was just in time to see him slip a revolver into his side pocket. My fear descended on me again, much worse than before. While I stood there glued to the spot with fear, he left the room, and I could hear him walking to the front door, telling the ladies that he was going out to see a friend of his, and that he would be back in a few moments. I knew that it was no friend of his that he was going to see—not with that gun in his pocket!

Gathering my courage, I again moved to the window. As I began to lower myself to the ground below, I was frightened at the prospect of what I might encounter in town; but thoughts of my father drove me to desperation. Quickly I slid out of the window and ran to the trail. The distance I had to cover was not more than a few yards at the most, but when I reached it, my heart was pounding and I was gasping for breath as if I had run miles instead of yards. Half running and half walking, I started to town. I ran when my courage was high, and walked when my courage began to wane.

I finally reached the head of Main Street, and by what little light the saloons and other establishments gave off I could see men moving up and down the street, and going in and out of the saloons. Keeping well into the shadows, I started down the street on the south side. As I carefully advanced down the street I could see that our men all kept on this, their own side of the street, while the Purdyville men were all keeping on their own side.

FROM one shadow to another I moved down the street, while closely scanning each face that came into my range of vision; but my father's was not yet to be seen. Peeking into the saloon windows, I could see men at the bars drinking, while others sat at the tables playing

cards. But the minds of these men were not upon cards or liquor. They were merely killing time until open warfare should break out. Whenever the doors would swing open to admit a newcomer, every head in the place would turn toward it; upon seeing a friend entering they would exchange brief greetings and go back to their cards and drinks.

Suddenly, from across the street and directly opposite me, I heard several crashes and thuds, followed by men's voices raised in anger and excitement. These sounds were coming from the Star Saloon, the principal hangout for the Purdyville men. In the brief moment that had passed since I first heard the noise, there flashed through my mind a single thought: my father was in there fighting for his very life. I started for the saloon, running as fast as I could. As I sped across the street with fear pushing me on, I glanced around me. I could see men pouring out of other saloons from both sides of the street, and they all seemed to be headed for the same place I was. The lid had blown off; and hell had come to Angels Camp.

WHEN I reached the doors of the saloon, I was leading the man nearest me by about fifty feet. With the next step I burst into the saloon. The sight that met my eyes paralyzed me. My father and a friend of his were backed against the rear wall, fighting off about ten Purdyville men, who seemed intent upon getting them and tearing them to pieces. My father had a chair in each hand, and with a fierce abandon was using them to the best of his ability. His friend also was busily engaged in crashing his chair down upon any head within clubbing distance.

My father's gaze happened to stray to the front door, and he saw me there. For a split second he seemed to freeze into immobility; a look of wonderment and alarm came over his face, but he could not stop to speak to me, for he was being closely pressed and had to protect himself.

The next moment the doors behind me were thrown open violently, and a mob of cursing men crashed through. Reinforcements for both sides had arrived.

One of the miners, seeing me there, pushed me toward the door, telling me to beat it. Afraid as I was of this vio-

lence, I would not leave. I wanted to be where I could watch my father, for I was very much afraid that he would be hurt. As I looked back toward him now, I could see that he had left his place and was fighting his way to my side, evidently with the thought to take me out to safety.

The next instant my head seemed to explode. I saw a million stars and everything seemed to whirl around in the front of me. Some one had thrown a bottle, and missing its mark, it had struck me on the forehead. Placing my hand to my head, I brought it back covered with blood. The sight made me very weak. I began to sway on my feet, and frantically searched the boiling mass of humanity in front of me for a sight of my father. He had seen that I was hurt, and he was in a hurry to get to my side. There was a snarl on his lips, and he was fighting like a demon. The last look I had of him was while he was disarming the bartender and then laying him out cold with the gun-barrel.

Right then I fell to the floor dead to the world—I had passed out completely. When my father reached my side, I learned later, he picked me up and hurried out of the door and down the street to the doctor's office. He thought that I was hurt more than I was. But he was destined never to know the extent of his son's injury, for he never even reached the doctor's office.

One of Father's worst enemies had seen him heading down the street, and thinking that this would be a good chance to get my father, he followed us to the end of Main Street, the doctor's office being located at the very foot of the street. Sneaking up behind us, he struck my father a blow over the head. . . . They buried my father a few days later. The blow had killed him instantly.

The cowardly murderer also paid for his crime. He was found out and arrested. While he was being taken to the county seat under guard for trial, a few of my dead father's friends met him on the highway, and after overpowering his guard, they hanged him to an oak tree beside the highway.

This proved that my father was well liked and had many friends in Angels; but it in no way brought back my father, whose death left a scar on my memory that time cannot erase.

The News of Battle

Few soldiers have smelled as much powder-smoke as the war-correspondent who under this title describes for us his extraordinary experiences. Be sure to read his story, in our next issue.

By GERALD BRANDON



Pancho Villa and Gerald Brandon

Mountain Men

A thrill-filled novelette dealing with a fine young civil war in the Kentucky hill country.

By ROBERT WINCHESTER

A specially impressive installment of "When Worlds Collide," by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie; a new exploit of that daring adventurer known as "the Wolf of Arabia;" lively chapters in Mr. Burroughs' "Tarzan and the Leopard Men;" and other excellent stories by such writers as H. Bedford-Jones, Clarence Herbert New, Arthur H. Carhart, Beatrice Grimshaw, and Arthur Akers.

All in the next, the December, issue of—

The BLUE BOOK Magazine

Copyright, 1932, by the McCall Company, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Printed in U. S. A.



*"Nature in the Raw
is seldom MILD"*

THE RAID ON THE SABINE WOMEN

"Nature in the Raw" as portrayed by Saul Tepper ... inspired by the story of the Roman warriors' ruthless capture of the Sabine village for the express purpose of carrying off its women (290 B.C.).



—and raw tobaccos have no place in cigarettes

They are *not* present in Luckies
... the *mildest* cigarette
you ever smoked

We buy the finest, the very finest tobaccos in all the world—but that does not explain why folks everywhere regard Lucky Strike as the mildest cigarette. The fact is, we never overlook the truth that "Nature in the Raw is Seldom

Mild"—so these fine tobaccos, after proper aging and mellowing, are then given the benefit of that Lucky Strike purifying process, described by the words—"It's toasted". That's why folks in every city, town and hamlet say that Luckies are such mild cigarettes.

"It's toasted"
That package of mild Luckies

Copy,
1932, The
American
Tobacco
Co.

"If a man write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbor, the world will make a beaten path to his door." —RALPH WALDO EMERSON.
Does not this explain the world-wide acceptance and approval of Lucky Strike?